



FAÇADE VIA PORTA ROSSA

# THE DAWANZATI PALACE FLORENCE ITALY

A RESTORED PALACE OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

MEASURED AND DRAWN TOGETHER WITH A SHORT DESCRIPTIVE TEXT

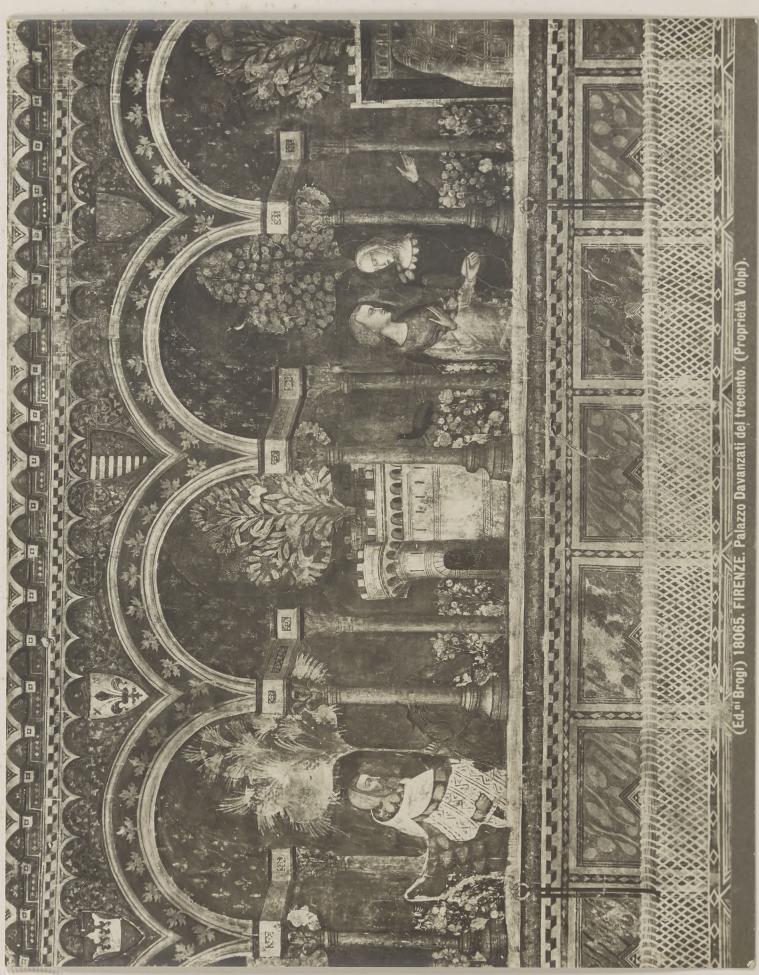
BY

LOUIS CONRAD ROSENBERG



1 9 2 2

THE ARCHITECTURAL BOOK PUBLISHING COMPANY PAUL WENZEL AND MAURICE KRAKOW NEW YORK



THT TO

VELLOSIA OF THE PARTY OF THE PA

# PREFATORY NOTE

HE Davanzati Palace of Florence appealed to me as a unique example for study of the domestic architecture of the early Renaissance and I felt that notes on the proportions, materials and color would be of value.

The following history of the palace has been written from information which Mr. Poggi has gathered by examining ancient documents in the State Archives.

Thanks are due to Professor Elia Volpi for his kindness in permitting measurements and photographs to be made of the palace, and to Mr. Tealdo Tealdi, Professor Volpi's secretary, who has been most helpful in giving additional information on the history and restoration of the palace.

Louis Conrad Rosenberg.

New York, Sept. 12, 1922.

## HISTORY

HE DAVANZATI PALACE, reflecting the private life of a rich and noble family of the fifteenth century, is situated in one of the quarters of Florence most renowned in history, the via Porta Rossa, which was one of the first streets inclosed within the circuit of medieval walls. Among the earliest inhabitants of this street were such names as the Soldanieri, the Monaldi, the Bostichi, the Cosi, the Bensi, the Bartolini, the Cocchi, the Cambi del Nero, the Arnoldi, the Davanzati and Davizzi, who, with their palaces, towers or more modest domiciles, made the via Porta Rossa one of the richest and most beautiful streets in the city, and one of the most important in the Sesto de Borgo.

The Davizzi, like many other noble families of the thirteenth century, owned a block of houses in which dwelt members of the various branches of the family. Such blocks or "islands" were separated from others by streets and could be converted into strongholds should the necessity demand. The Davizzi block was bounded on the north by the via Porta Rossa; on the east by a narrow passageway separating it from the houses of the Cambi del Nero; on the south by the via Capaccio and on the west by a passageway which separated it from the houses which later belonged to the Del Beni and in the sixteenth century to the Tornabuoni. This is the site occupied by the Davanzati Palace.

There are indications that the tiers of rooms marked I and IV on the plans, were towers from an early date, the former having its entrance in the via Porta Rossa and the latter in the via Capaccio. In the fourteenth century, the court and the rooms above marked II and III were built and the whole incorporated into one palace.

The palace was common property of the different members of the family, who held it in shares. A parchment of the State Archives, belonging to the Magliabechiana Library, has an entry that on the 8th of December of the year 1424 Andrea di Dominique di Gherardo Davizzi gave to his uncle, Giovanni di Gherardo, one-half of the Davizzi Palace "not subject to being sold." Another entry in 1427 states that at the institution of the Catasto della Decima a tax of ten per cent on land survey was divided equally between Antonio di Domenico and Palla Davizzi. Lorenzo di Giovanni di Gherardo owned the palace from 1469 to 1498, when it is described in his declaration to the officers of the Decima as "a palace with three wool shops." Some time during the fifteenth century the palace served as the residence of the officers of the Decima.

By the beginning of the sixteenth century the fortunes of the Davizzi were on the decline. Half of the palace had passed to Raphael, son of Tommaso di Bernardo Antinori, who, in 1502, gave it in donation "inter vivos" to the sons of Francesco Davizzi. Conditions of the family were such that they were unable to sustain the heavy expense, and on the 31st of December, 1516, Lorenzo, son of the late Giovanni, in the name also of Pier di Francesco Davizzi, sold the inherited palace to Onofrio di Lionardo di Zanobi Bartolini.

The Bartolini retained possession until 1578, when Zanobi di Bartolini sold it to Bernardo di Anton Francesco Davanzati, the noted historian, author of the history of the great schism of England and the translator of Tacitus.

At this date a new historical epoch began. The Davanzati was a very wealthy family and no doubt made many improvements in the building, chief among which was the spacious loggia on the top floor, added some time in the latter part of the sixteenth or early seventeenth century.

The palace remained the property of the Davanzati until 1838, when the family became extinct at the death of Carlo Giuseppi. In 1904 the property was purchased by Professor Elia Volpi, who, in 1905, undertook the restoration of the palace. The restoration covered a period of about six years and the palace, furnished with furniture and works of art of the period, is open as a private museum.

# DESCRIPTION

HE façade for the most part is of "Pietra Forte," a buff sandstone. The first story has rustications projecting about an inch and a half. The second and third stories are plain with the area above the windows of the third story filled with small stones similar to paving blocks. The fourth story is also plain but has an infill of red bricks above the windows. The façade is crowned with a spacious loggia, the walls and piers of which are red brick and the columns of "Pietra Serena," a blue-gray sandstone. The roof of red tiles rests on four open trusses of wood. The windows have been restored to their former dimensions and glazed with old glass; on the second and third stories round discs and on the fourth diamond panes. At the sides of the windows of the second, third and fourth stories are iron hooks on which were placed the wooden poles for the awnings. Below these are iron brackets supporting a pole about three feet from the wall over which the awnings were hung, thereby allowing a free circulation of air through the windows and at the same time keeping out the sun. Under the sill courses are iron hooks spaced about a foot apart from which draperies and tapestries were displayed on state occasions, fetes, etc. The hooks, torch holders and hitching rings on the first story are of very fine workmanship: wrought iron of simple forms with conventionalized animal heads and incised decorations of lines and circles.

In the center of the façade above the second story window is the coat-of-arms of the Davanzati family.

The entrance to the palace is through the spacious vestibule, a room twenty-two feet wide by fifty-one feet long with a vaulted ceiling twenty-four feet high springing from corbels of Pietra Serena. The walls and ceiling are plaster and the floor is red brick.

The large doorway in the south wall of the vestibule leads into the court, perhaps the most interesting feature of the entire palace. Here three octagonal columns and two engaged columns support four arches upon which rest the south and west walls of the upper stories of the court. Supported by corbels from this wall at the second, third and fourth floor levels, are balconies which form the exterior circulation for the rooms on these floors. On the north side of the court and on the fifth floor these balconies are supported on wood beams.

The columns and corbels on the ground story show a variety of designs; in the disposition of parts they are decidedly classic but are Gothic in detail and execution. In the column (I) a small figure has been used. Perhaps the most original of all is the capital of column (III) upon which the heads of different members of the Davizzi family have been carved.

On column (VII) is the coat-of-arms of the Davizzi, a device which recurs in many parts of the decoration of the rooms above. The column bases as well as the capitals differ in design.

On the second floor facing the via Porta Rossa is the principal room in the palace and undoubtedly the grand salon of the head of the family. This room is twenty-three feet wide by fifty-three feet long with a ceiling height of twenty feet, and lighted by five large windows of leaded glass. Some time after the ceiling was decorated, the room was divided at the second beam from the east wall. The designs in the three west panels are very elaborate and have been applied over the same decorations that are in the two east panels. In both, the colors and device of the Davizzi are prominent. The background color alternates on the beams, rafters and in the small panels. The plaster walls are a mottled ochre varying from a light buff to a black and brown earth. In the south wall is a very richly carved fireplace of Pietra Serena which has been attributed to Michelozzo. Around the entire room about five feet below the beams are small iron hooks fourteen inches apart, from which tapestries were hung. The floor is red brick which has been oiled and rubbed to a color similar to polished chestnuts.

Adjoining the west end of the grand salon and designated as (BII) on the plan, is the second room in importance, and now called the "Room of the Parrots"—a name given because the parrot is used in the decorations on the walls. The ceiling of this room is extremely rich and like the one in (BI) has two different designs which indicate that perhaps at one time this room also was divided. The two south panels are similar to the two east panels of (BI) and probably date from the fifteenth century. The painted walls are a mixture of elements and details applied without regard for the heavy beams of the ceiling. The decorations consist of an elaborate cornice resting on small columns which in turn rest on a wall. Upon this wall is represented a tapestry suspended on a pole. There is a strong predominance of red and green, making the whole room somewhat theatrical and bizarre. In the west wall is a fourteenth century fireplace of very good proportions.

The room designated as (BIII) has little of interest, except perhaps the fireplace. The wood ceiling is similar to those in the rooms just mentioned.

In (BIV) great skill has been shown in applying the device of the Davizzi and allied families. On the lower half of the walls the letter "D" has been arranged to form a pattern of panels in which alternates the crown, the fleur-de-lis and the lion. Above this and arranged in a painted cornice of Gothic arches resting on brackets, are various shields of families and cities. In the west wall is a tabernacle with a frame of Pietra Serena. The doors are of brown wood with decorations stencilled in ivory. The decoration on the ceiling is similar in color and pattern to that in (BI). The floor, like that of the other rooms of this story, is of red brick.

On the third floor the arrangement of rooms is similar to the floor below, but the details and decorations are much simpler, except perhaps the room marked (CIV) called the nuptial chamber of the Davizzi-Alberti. The coats-of-arms of the two families occur in the ceiling and wall decorations. Around the entire room near the ceiling is a frescoed frieze illustrating a poem by Antonio Pucci which is taken from "Le Roman de la Vergy," a love legend of old Provence.

The plan of the fourth floor is the same as the two floors below. In (DI), the stone corbels indicate that before the loggia was added in the sixteenth century this room was vaulted and possibly supported a terrace with battlements similar to other buildings of Florence during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The height is much lower and all details simpler than the stories below. The ceiling of (DIV) is the only one which has been decorated.

On the fifth floor is the spacious loggia which at one time commanded a splendid view of the city of Florence and surrounding hills. This view has now been partially destroyed by the erection of a modern building to the north.

## RESTORATION

HEN Prof. Volpi acquired the property, the palace had degenerated into nothing more than a tenement. Many of the windows had been narrowed and some enlarged, as well as many partitions added in the interior.

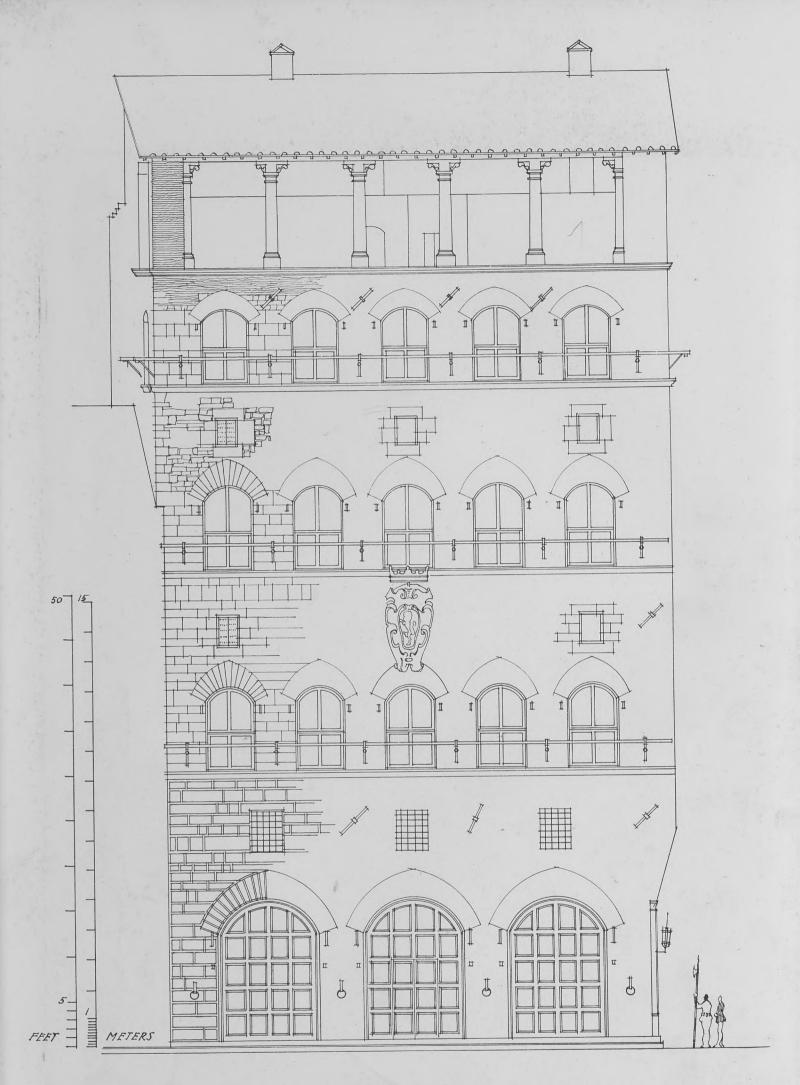
In 1905 the building was vacated and a very careful survey made, when the original walls and floors were located. All later additions were removed and the walls and ceilings cleaned of their many coats of whitewash, bringing to light again the colored decorations.

In the course of centuries, the palace had suffered from neglect, but through the many additions and alterations the original structure of the building remained.

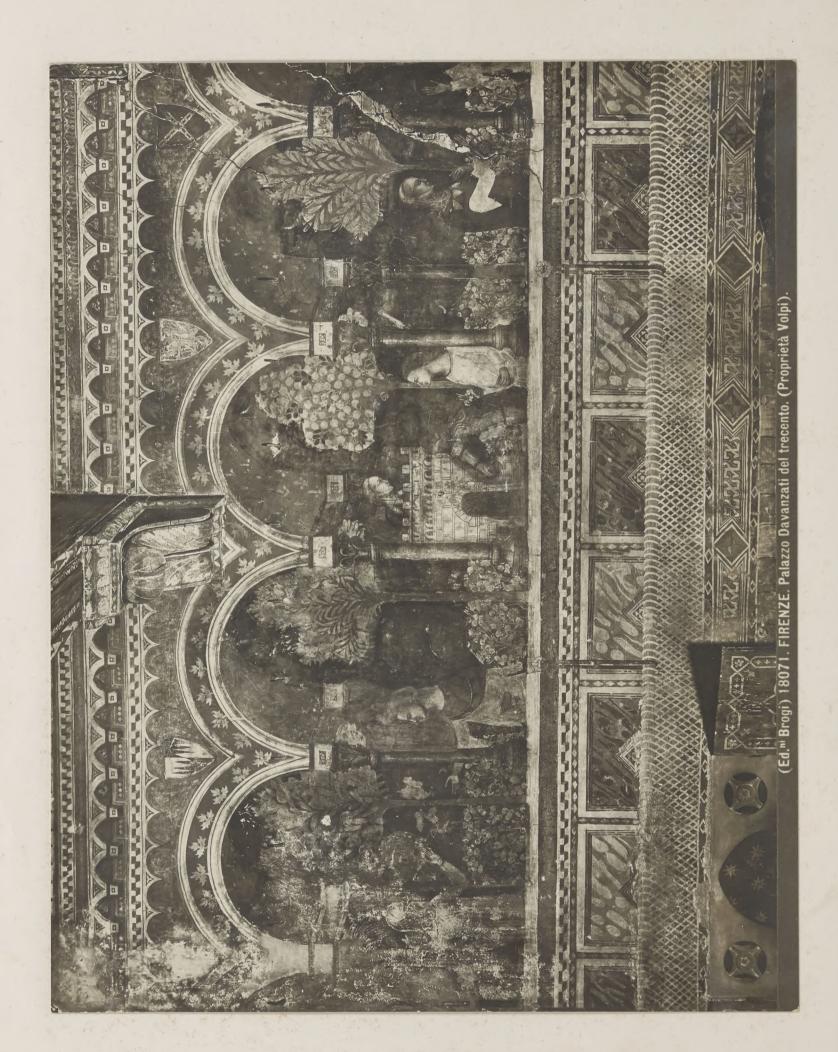
In restoring, it was necessary to replace doors and windows but in every case old materials were employed. The central door in the façade is original and had never been removed. The plaster walls for the most part are original. Age, smoke and other elements are responsible for the mottled color which is one of the chief attractions of the interior. The brick floors have all been replaced. In some instances a certain amount of restoration was necessary on the wall decorations. In the upper stories of the court, practically all the wood construction has been replaced.

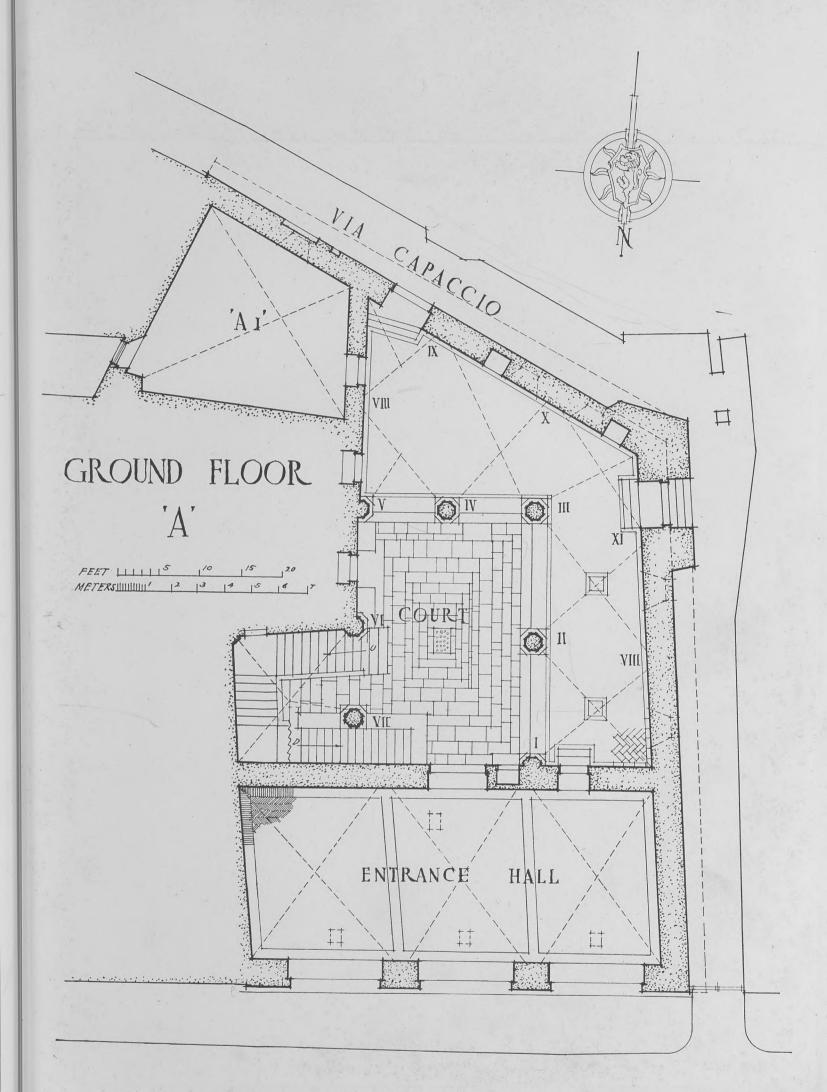
The restoration was carried out under the personal supervision of Prof. Volpi.



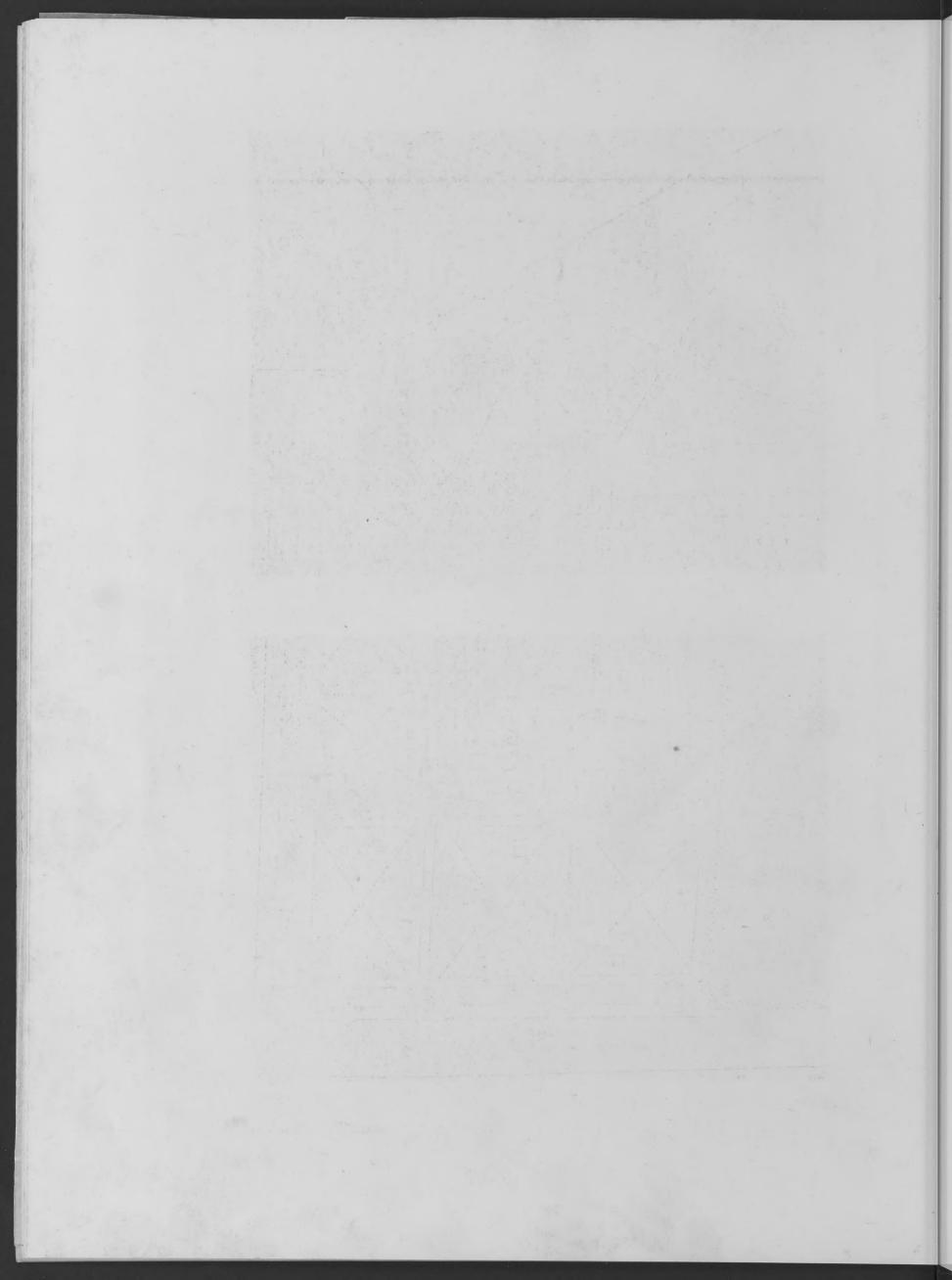


FACADE VIA PORTA ROSSA

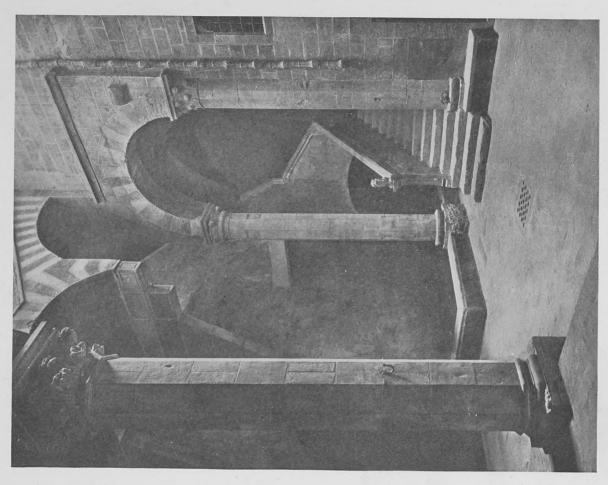




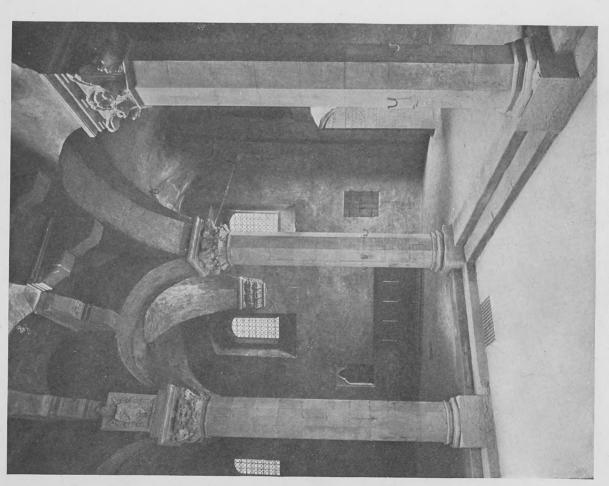
VIA PORTA ROSSA



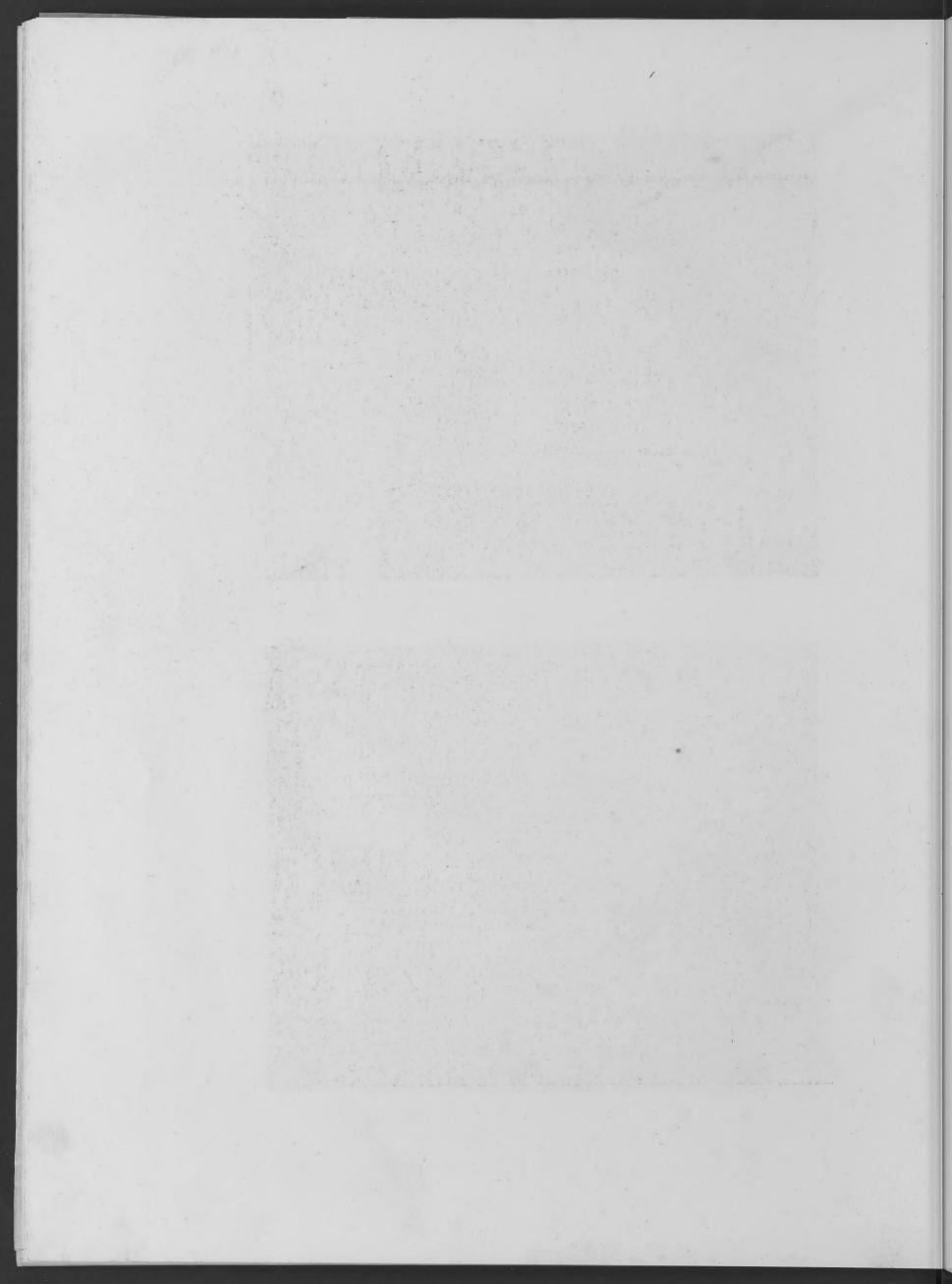


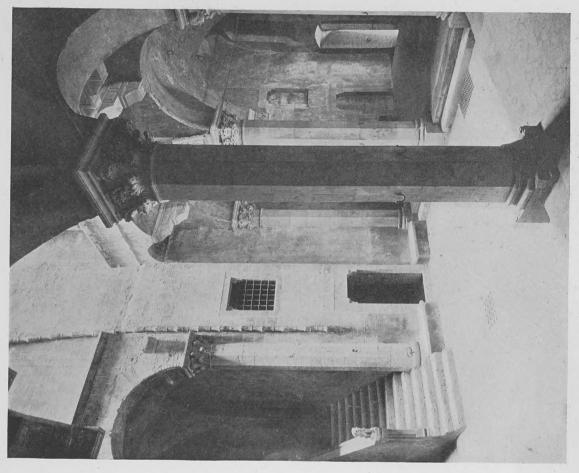


STAIRWAY FROM COURT—GROUND FLOOR

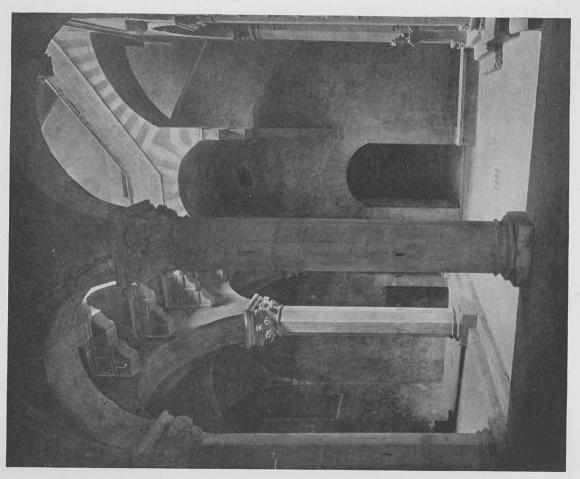


VIEW IN COURT—GROUND FLOOR

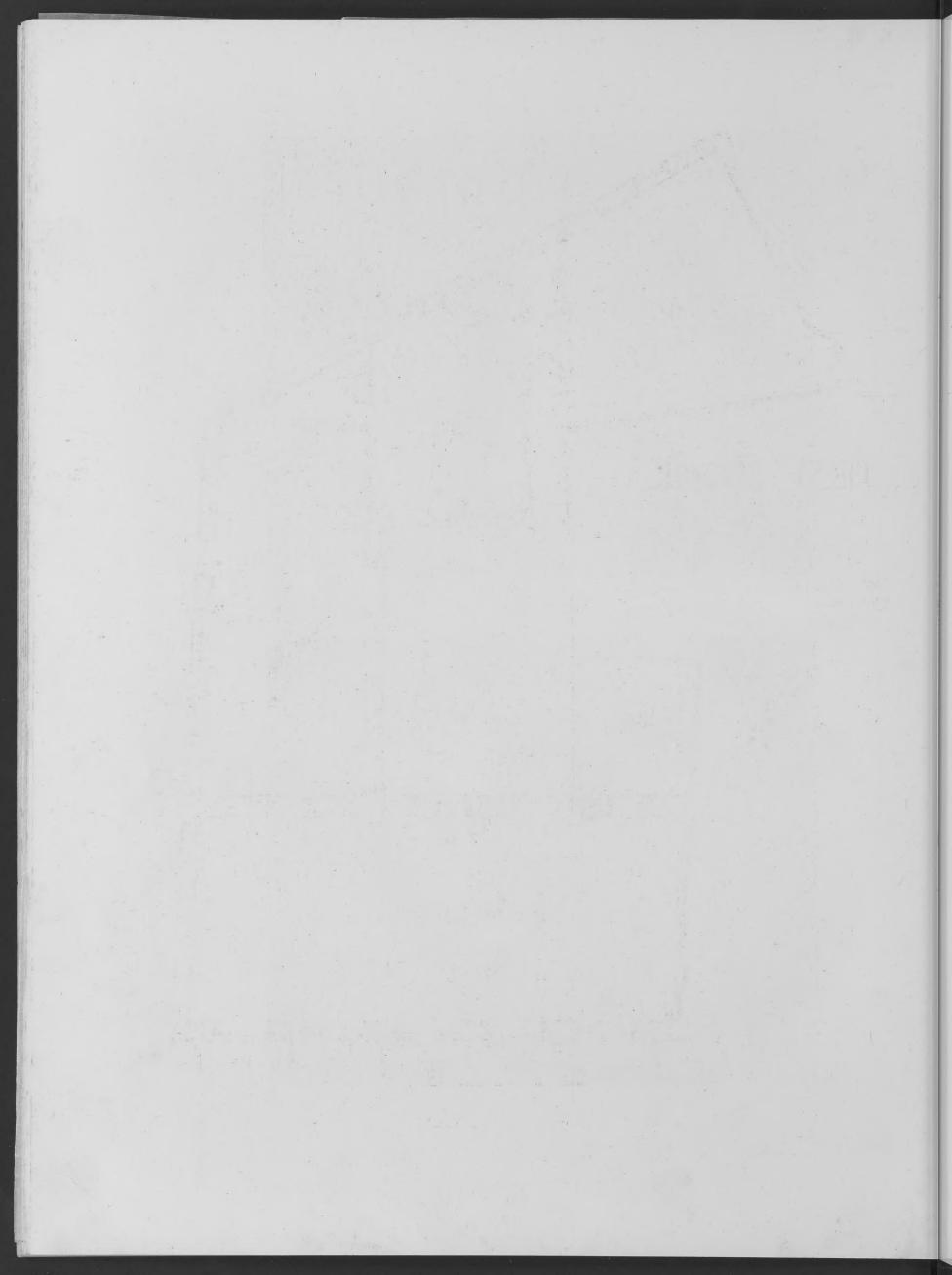


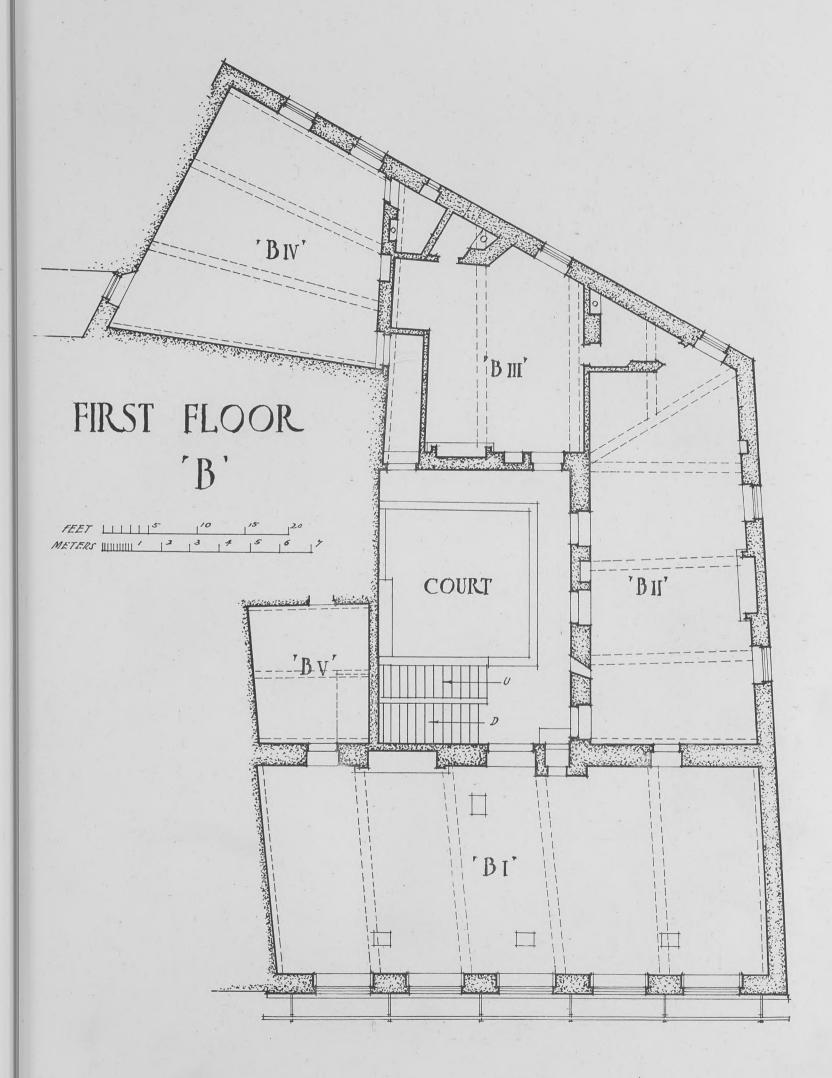


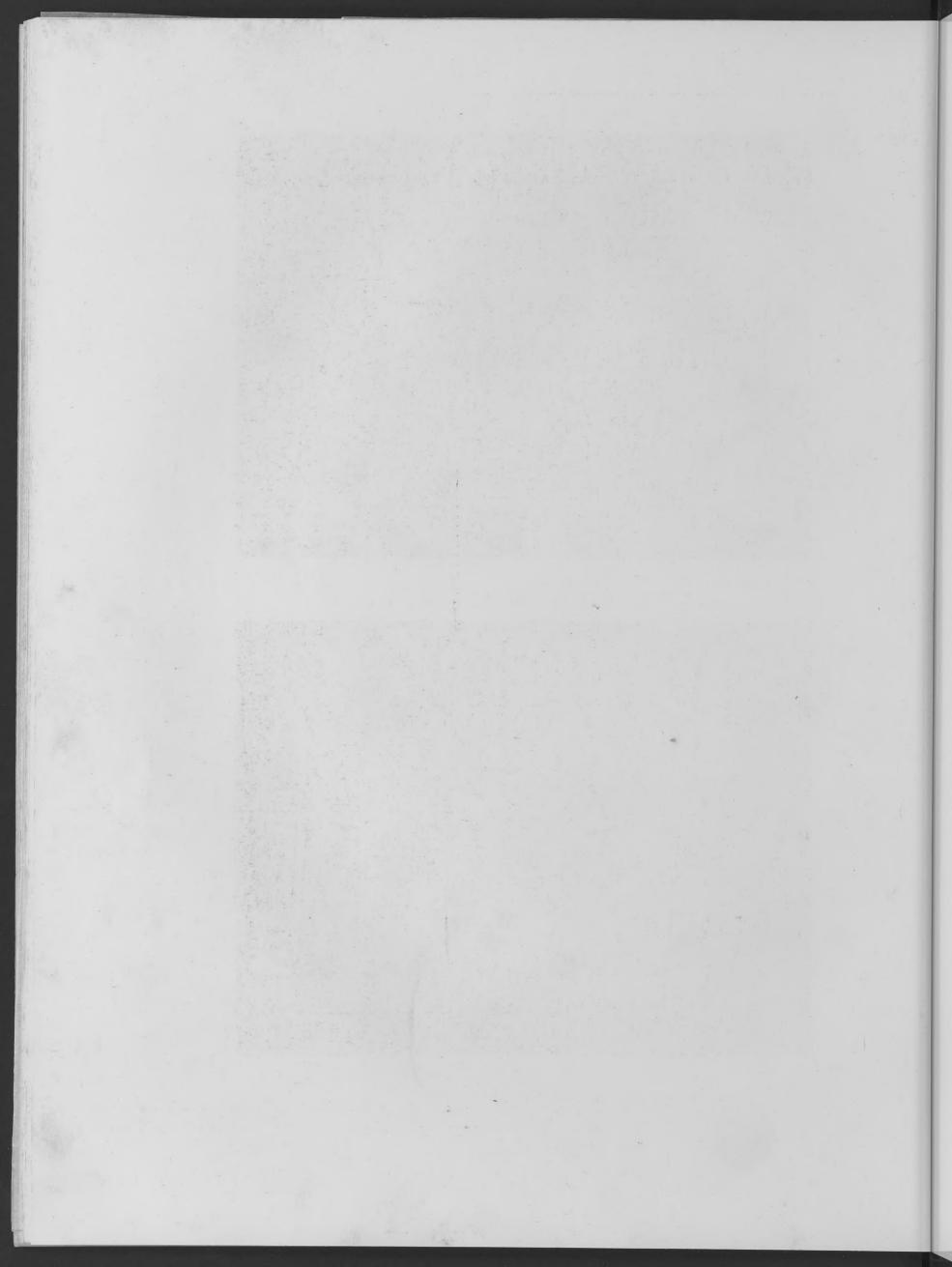
COURT--VIEW TOWARDS STAIRS



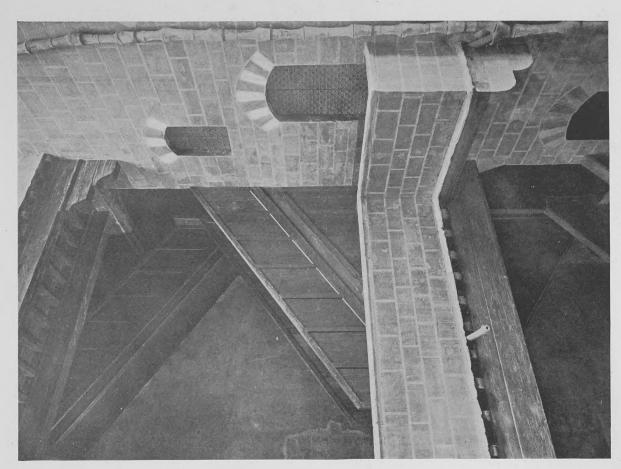
COURT-VIEW TOWARDS ENTRANCE



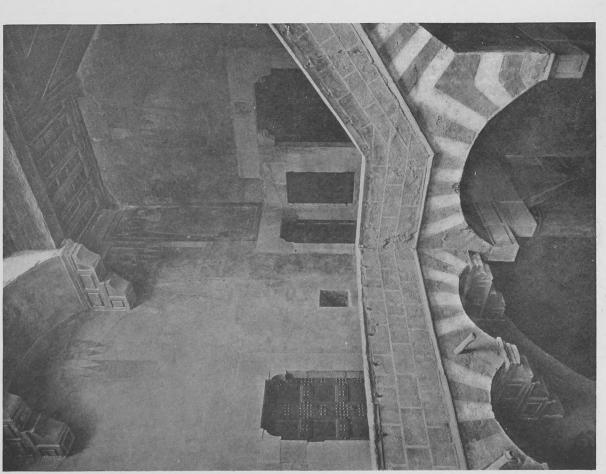






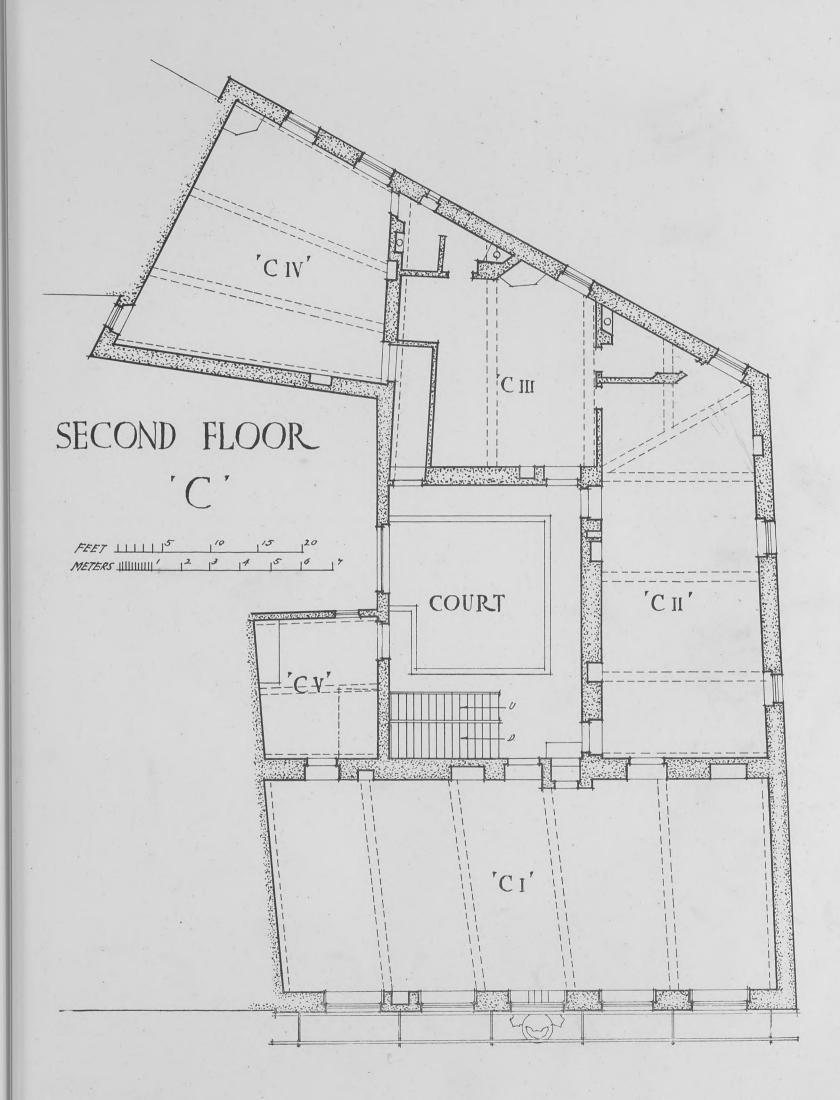


DETAIL OF COURT ON SECOND FLOOR

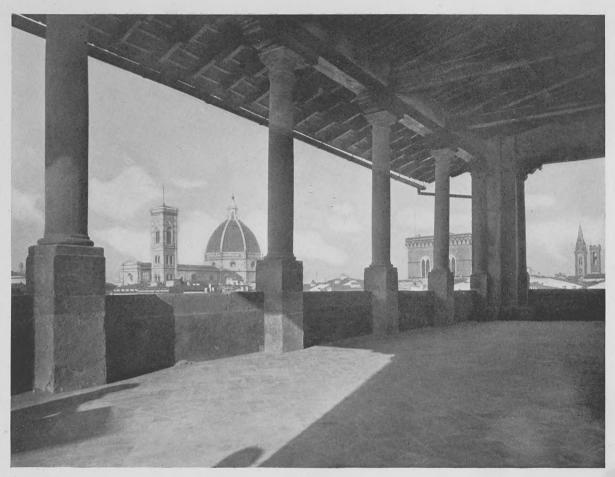


VIEW IN COURT—FIRST FLOOR

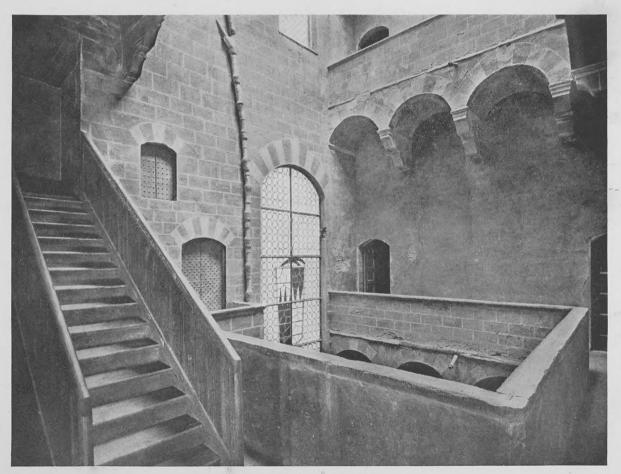




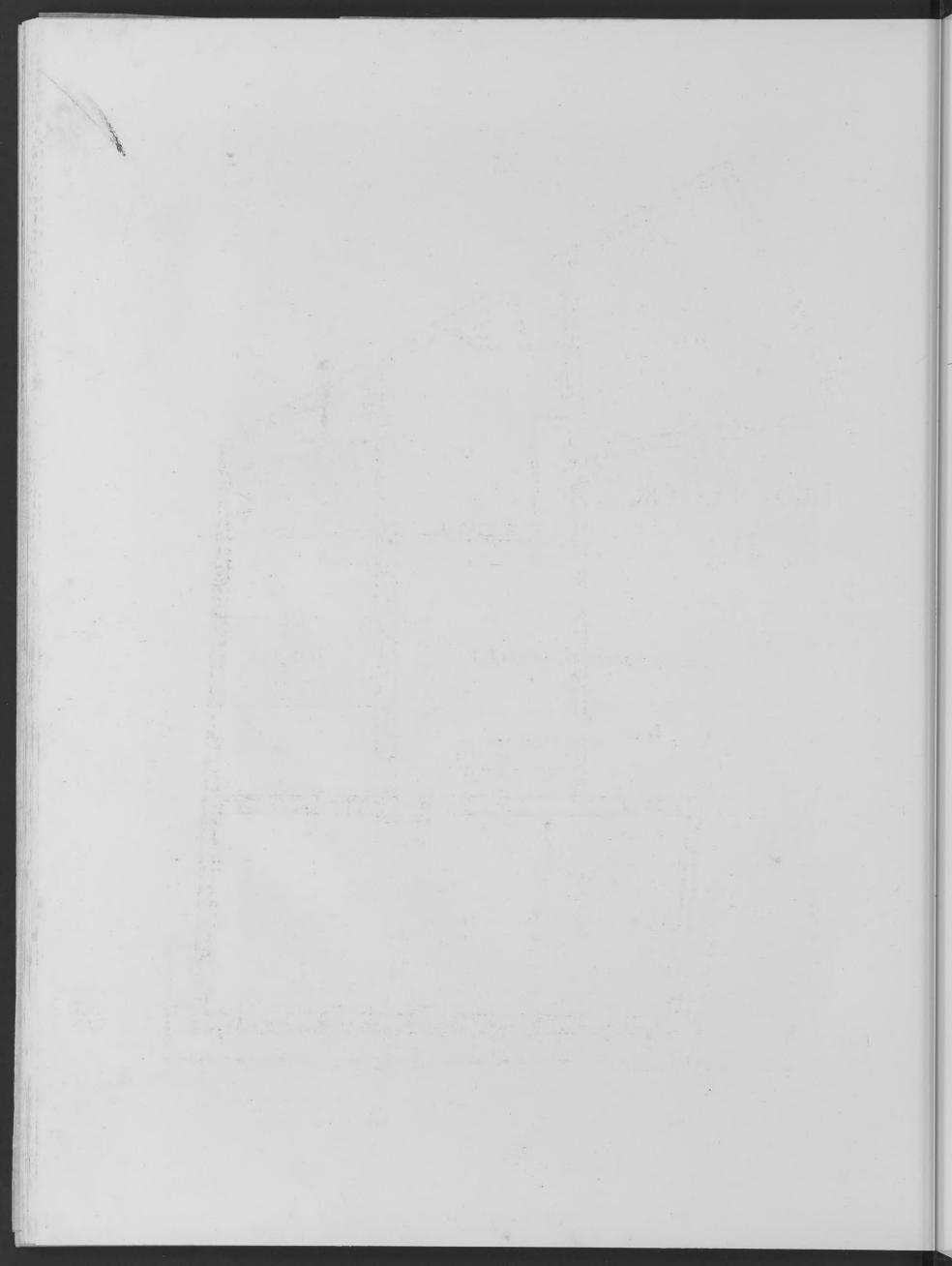


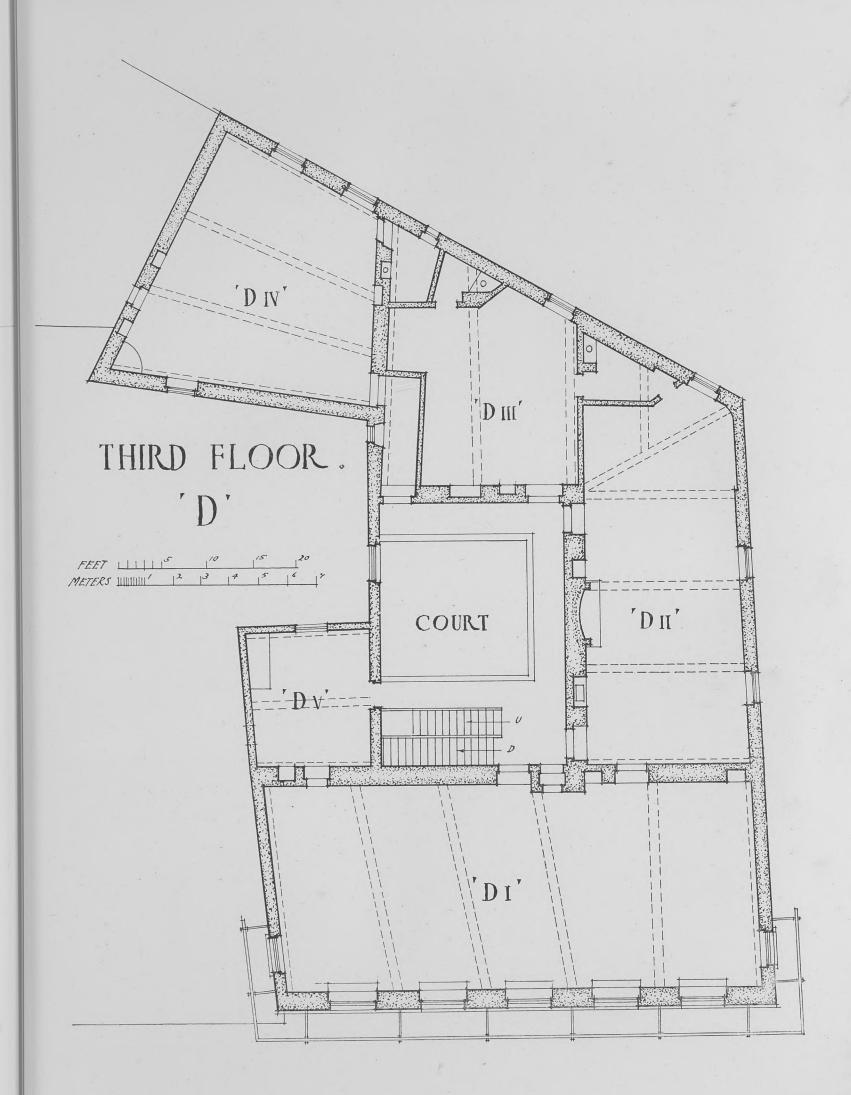


LOGGIA

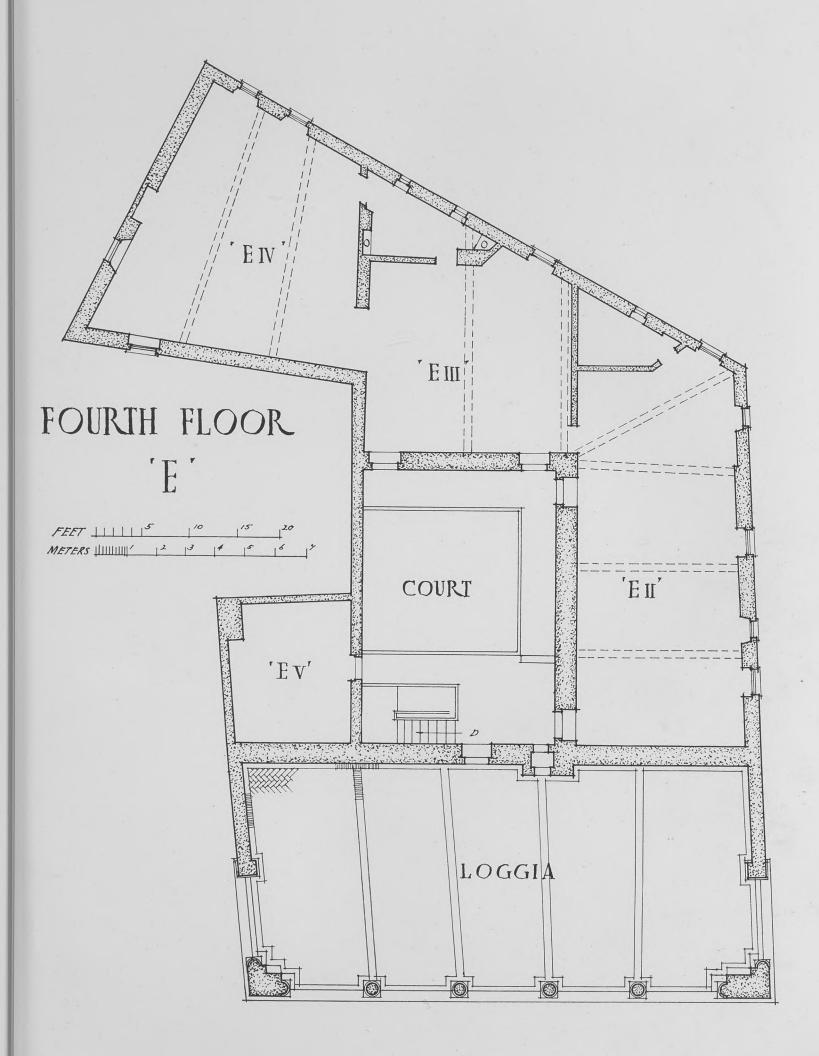


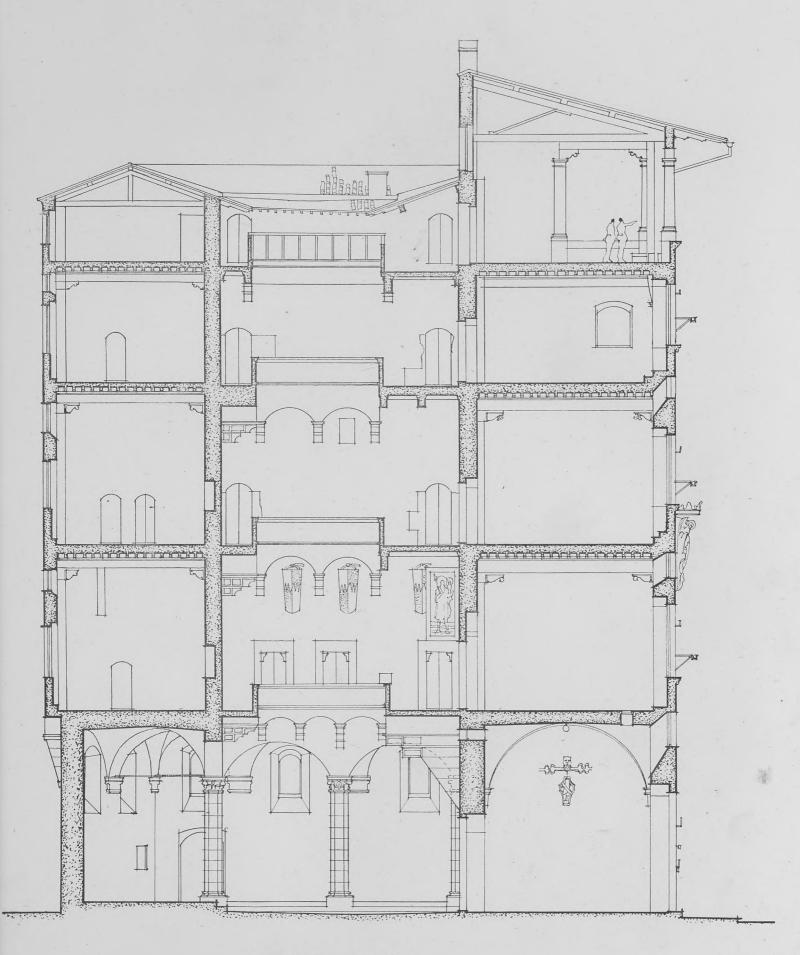
COURT—ON SECOND FLOOR









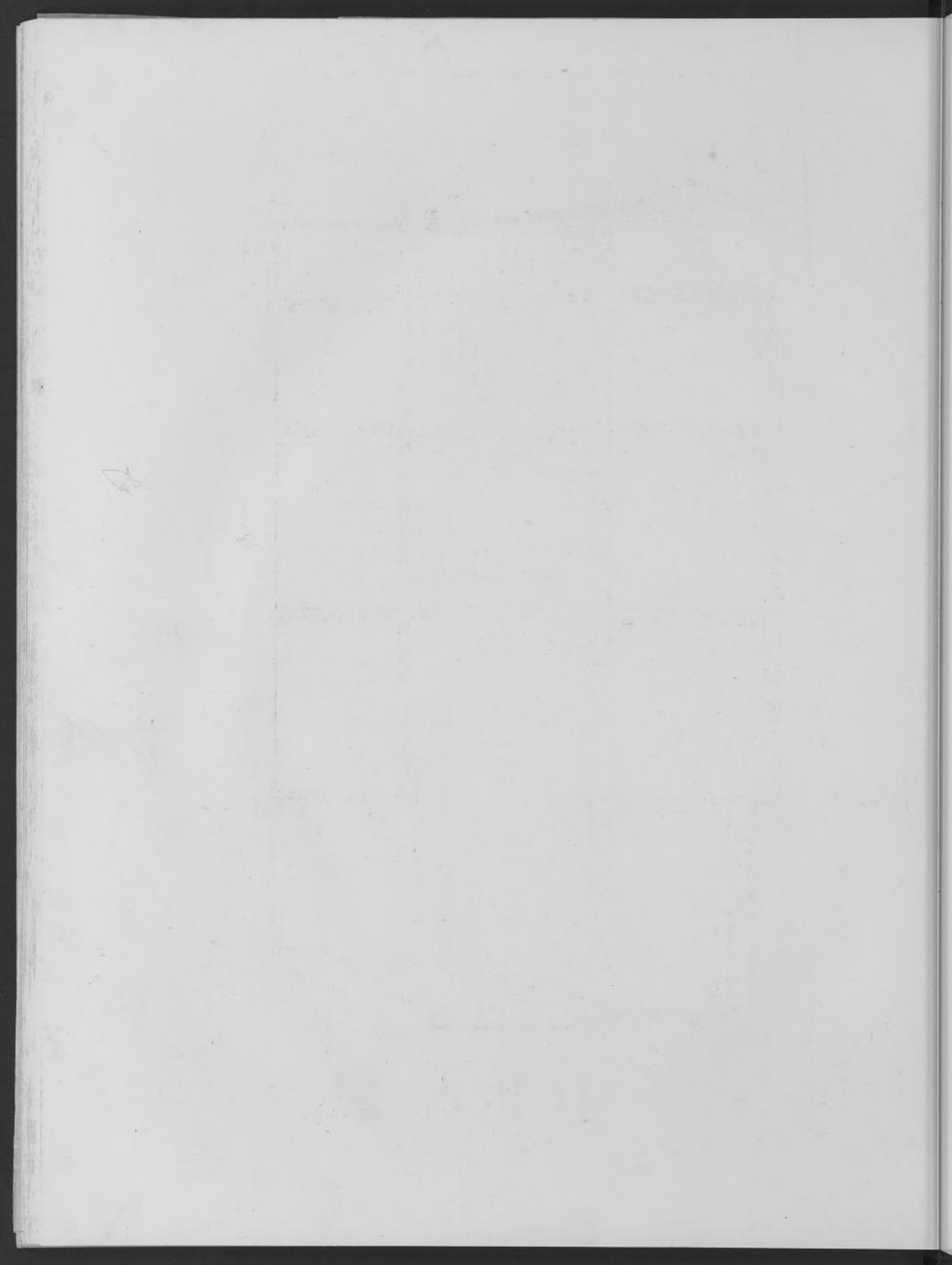


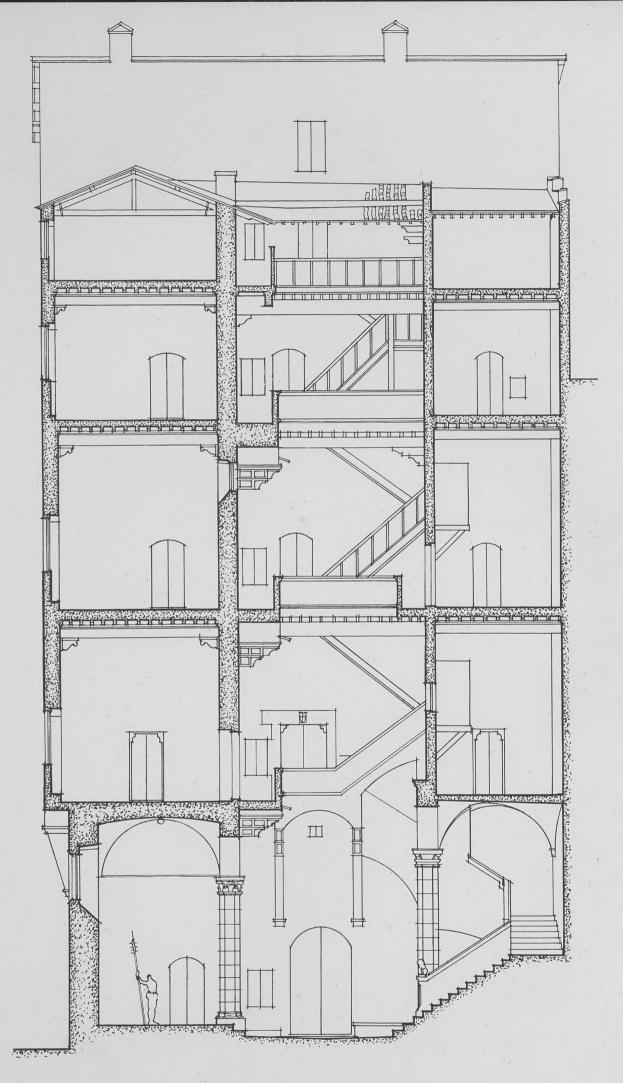
## SECTION

LONGITUDINAL

FEET 15 10 15 20 25 30

METERS 111111111 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10





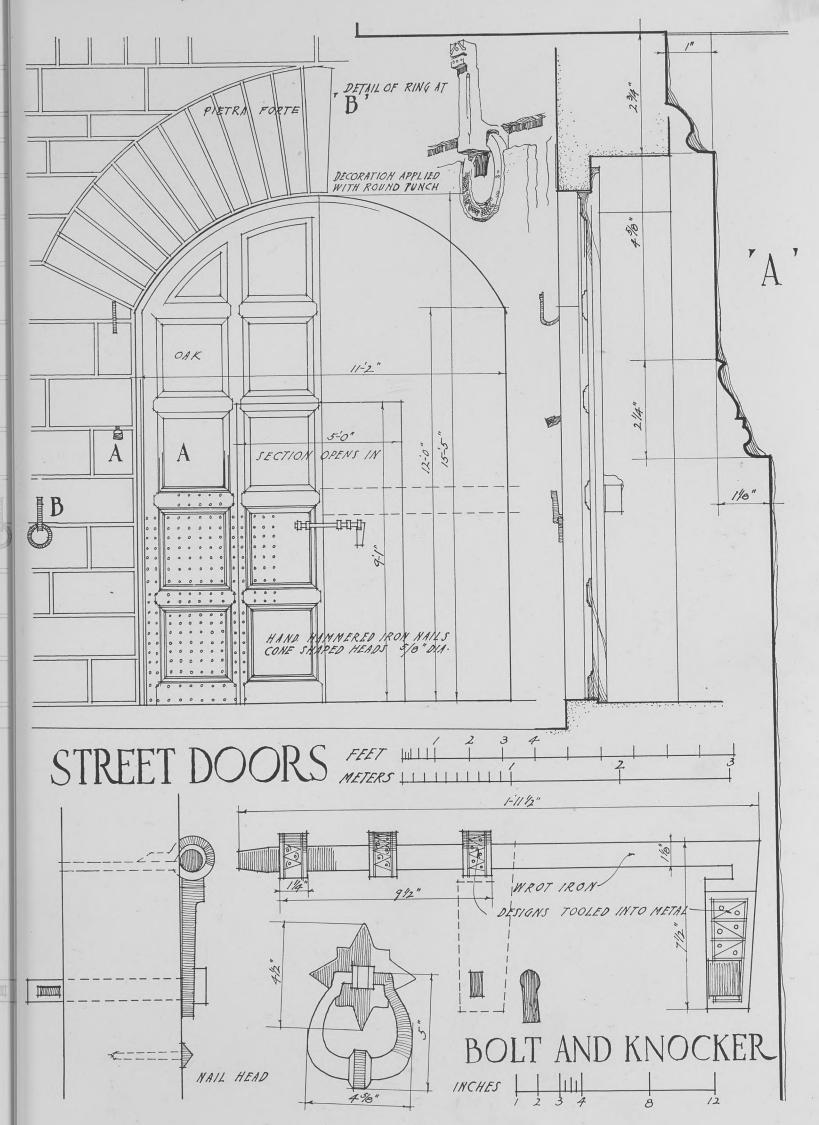
## SECTION

TRANSVERSE

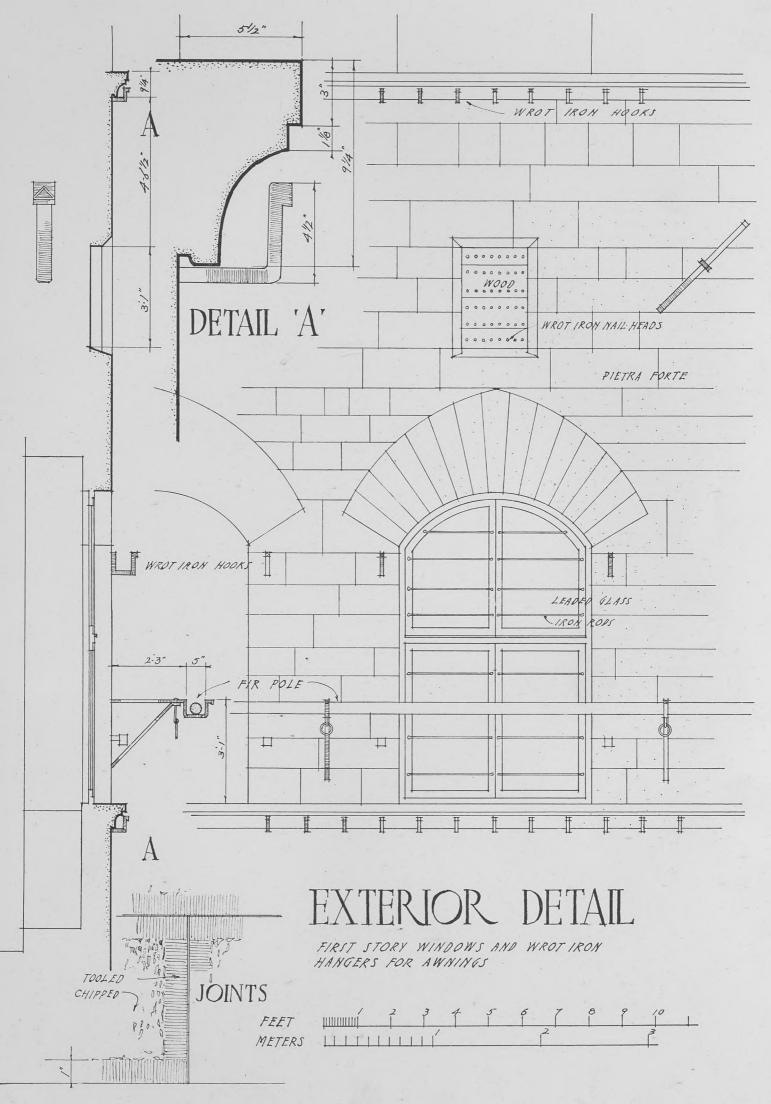
FFET 1 5 10 15 20 25 30

METERS 1 7 8 9 10

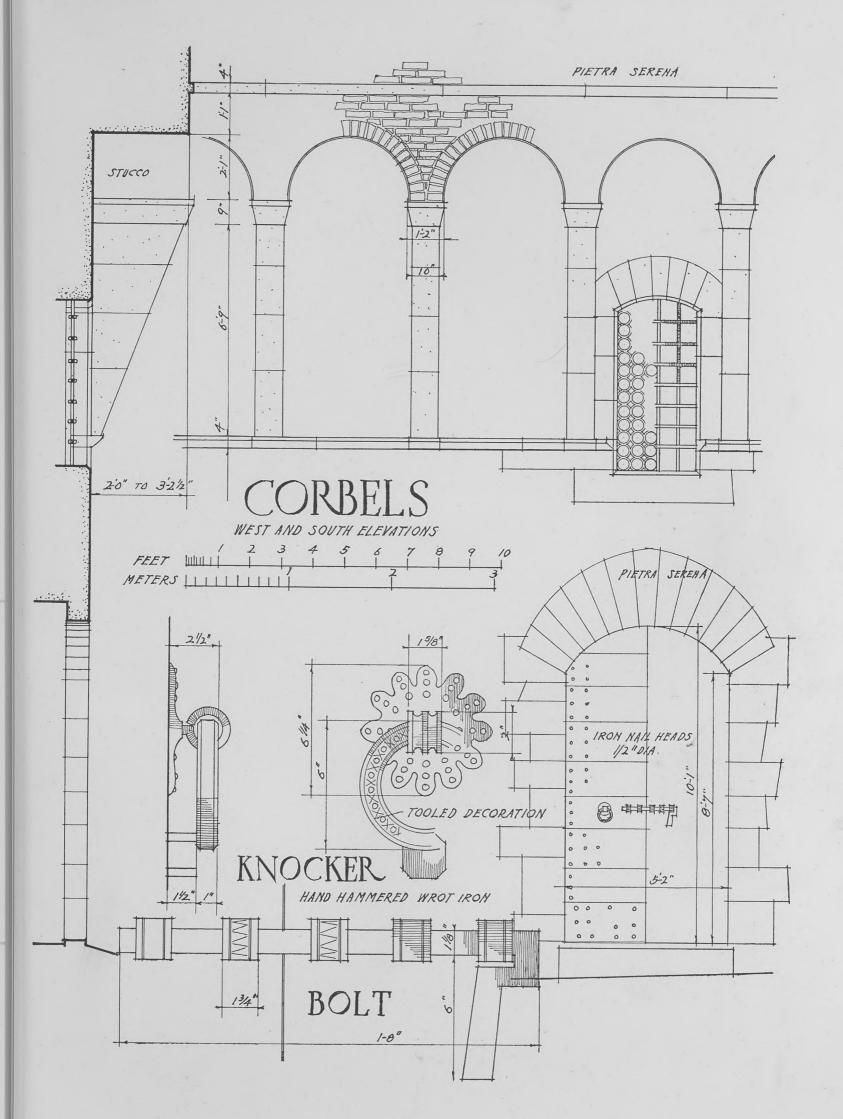




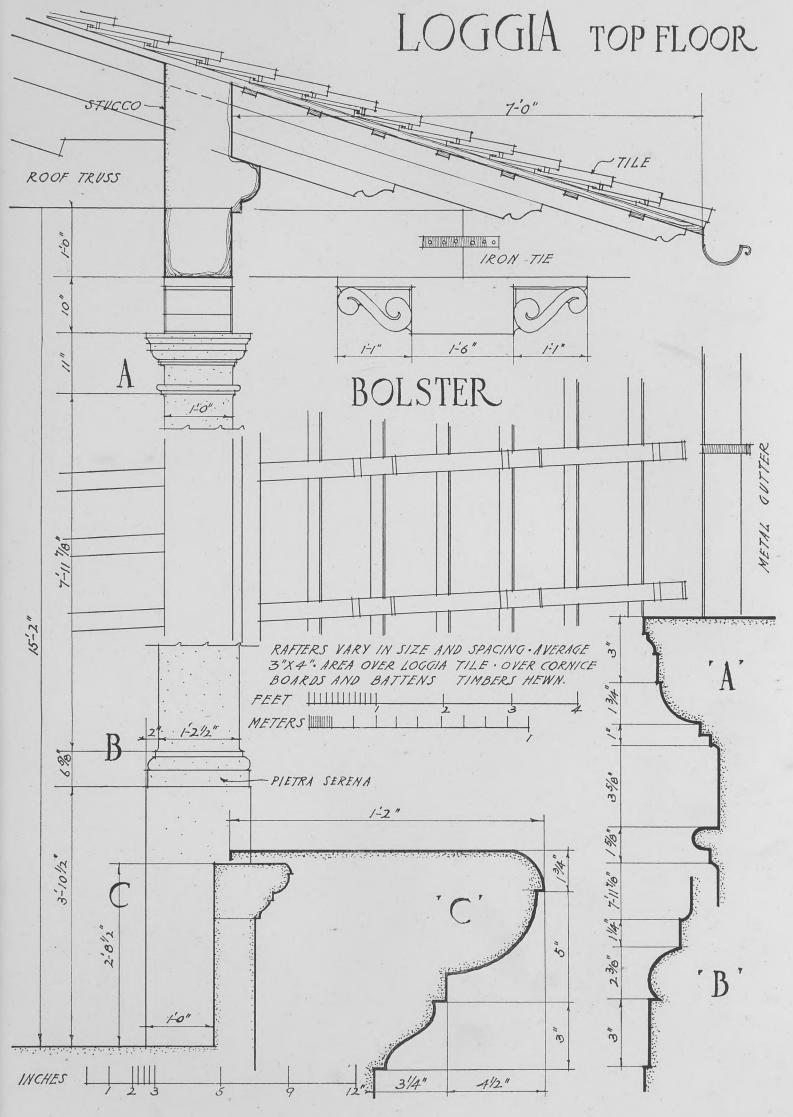


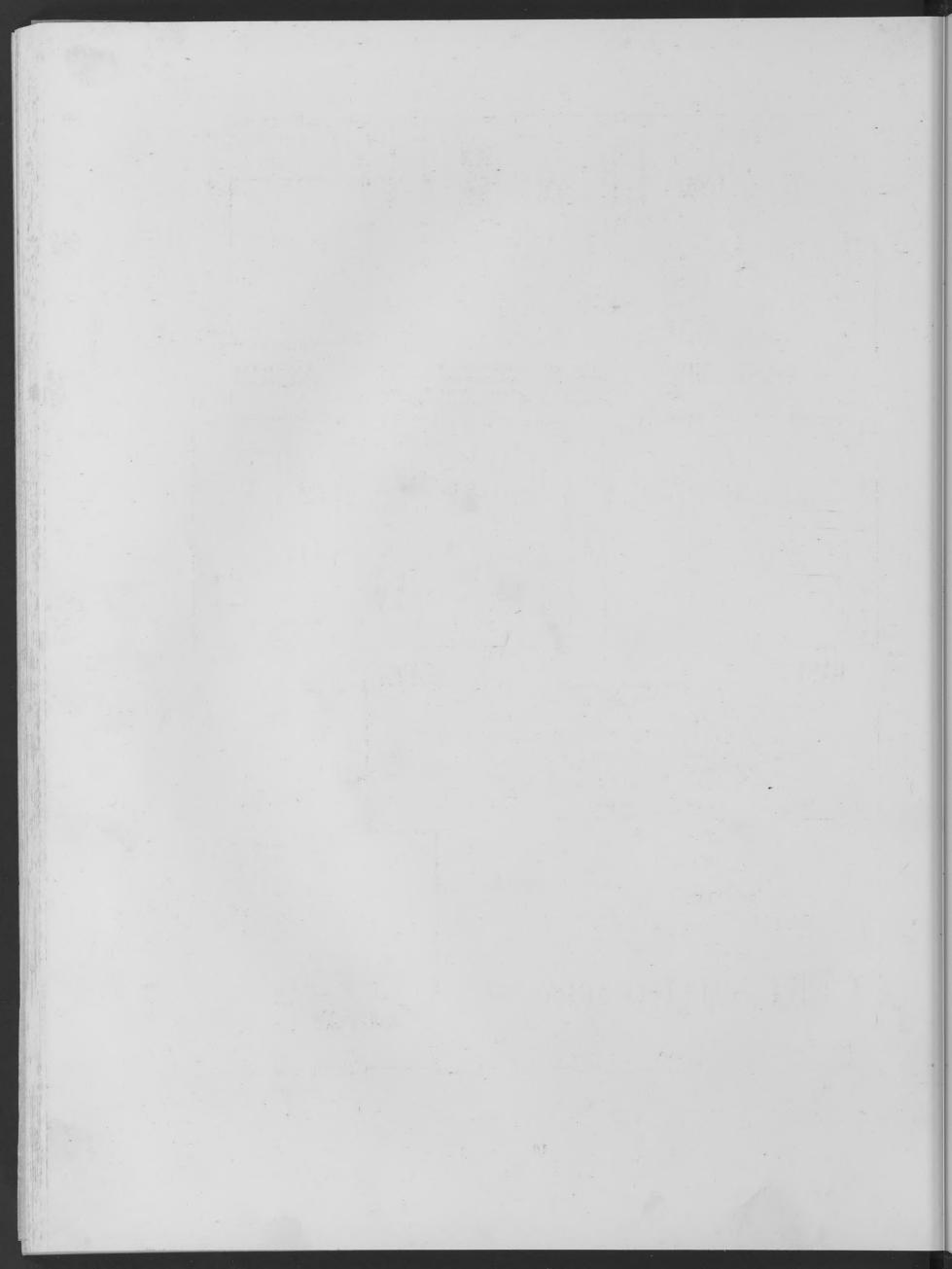


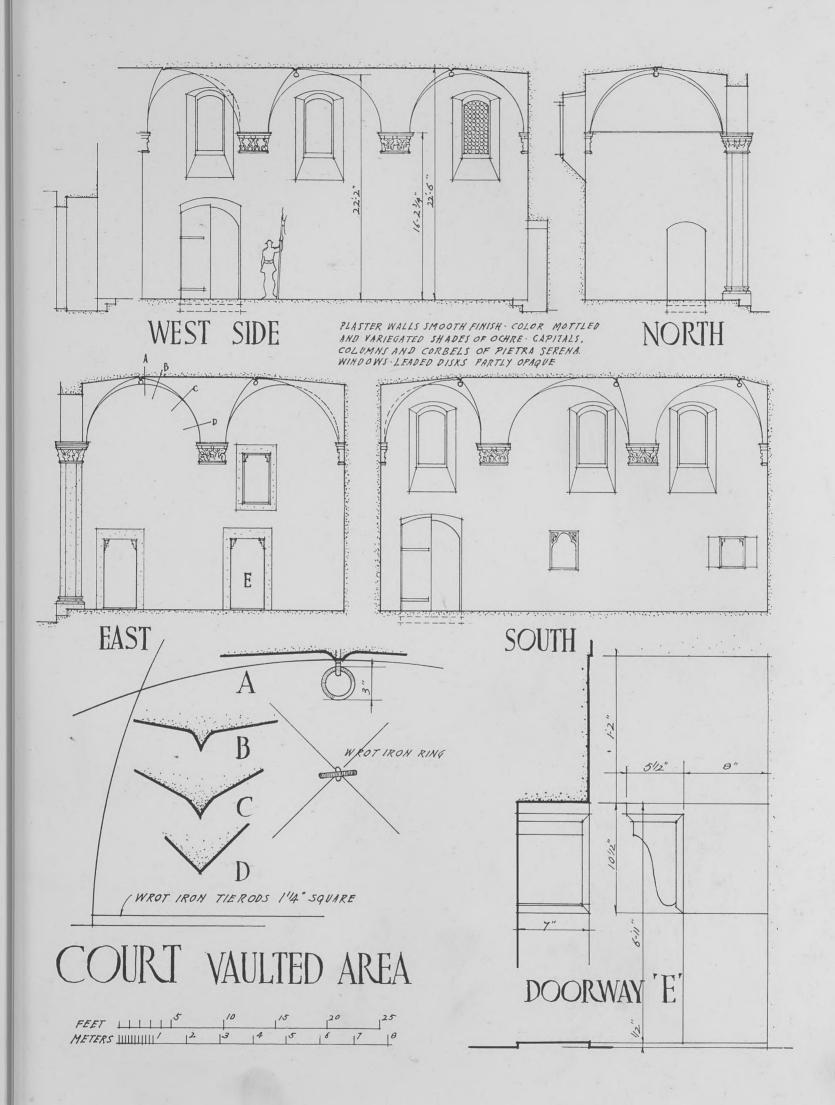




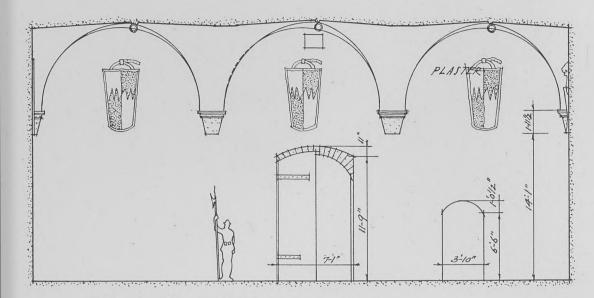












PLASTER WALLS SMOOTH

FINISH COLOR MOTTLED

AND VARIEGATED SHADES

OF OCHRE AND BROWN.

CORBELS OF PIETRA

SERENA SMALL DOOR

OF WALNUT LARGE

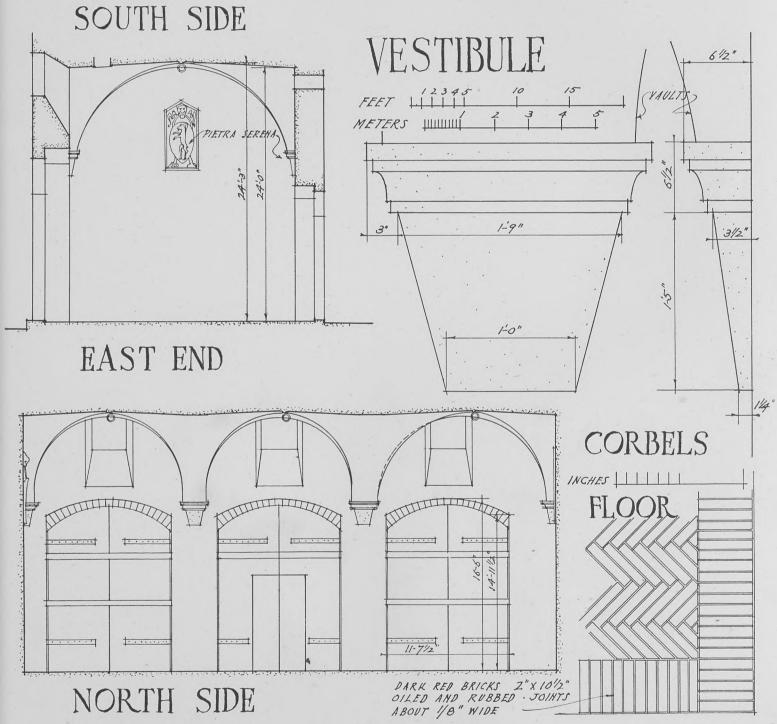
DOOR OF FIR AND STUDDED

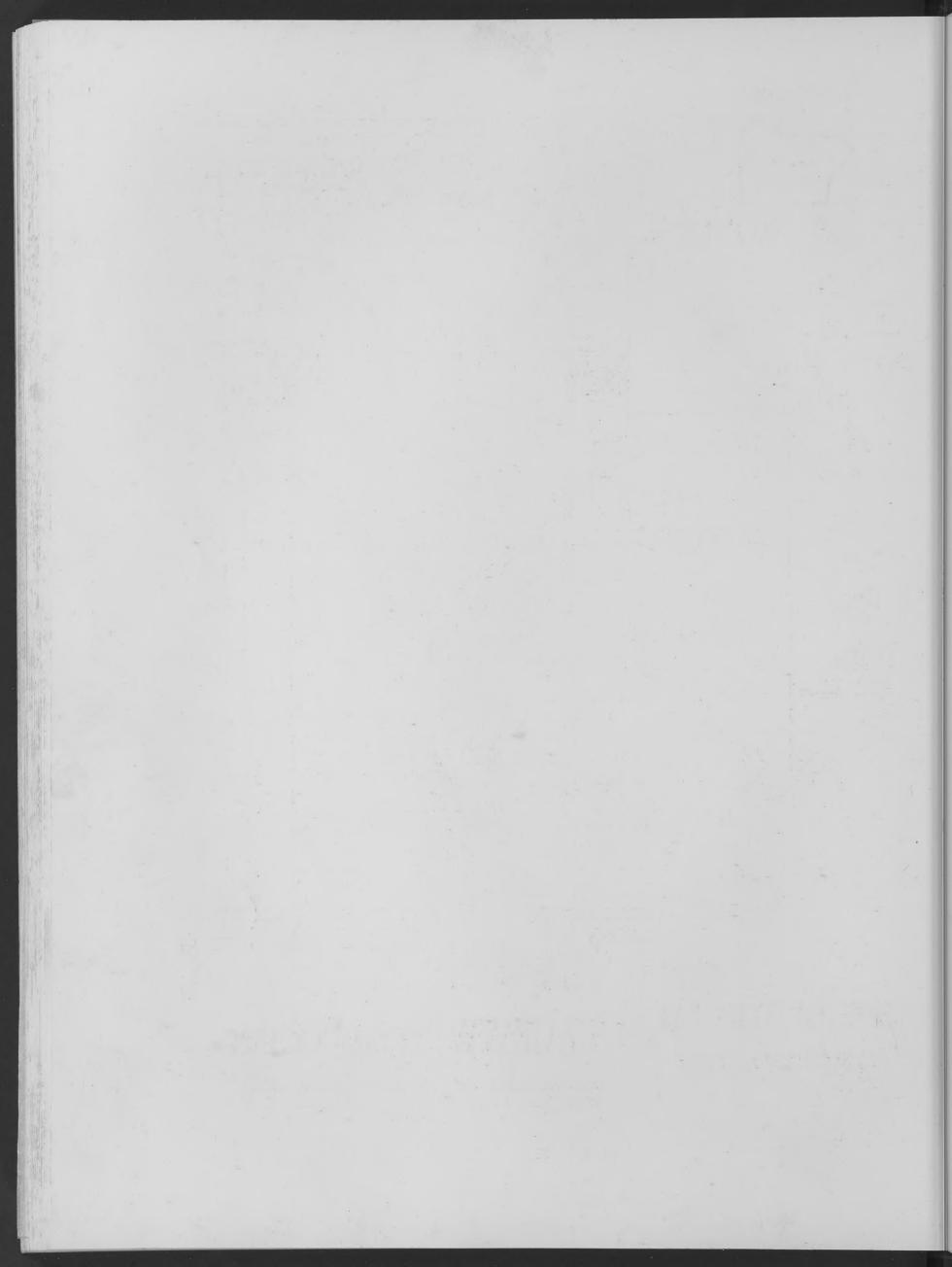
WITH IRON SPIKES

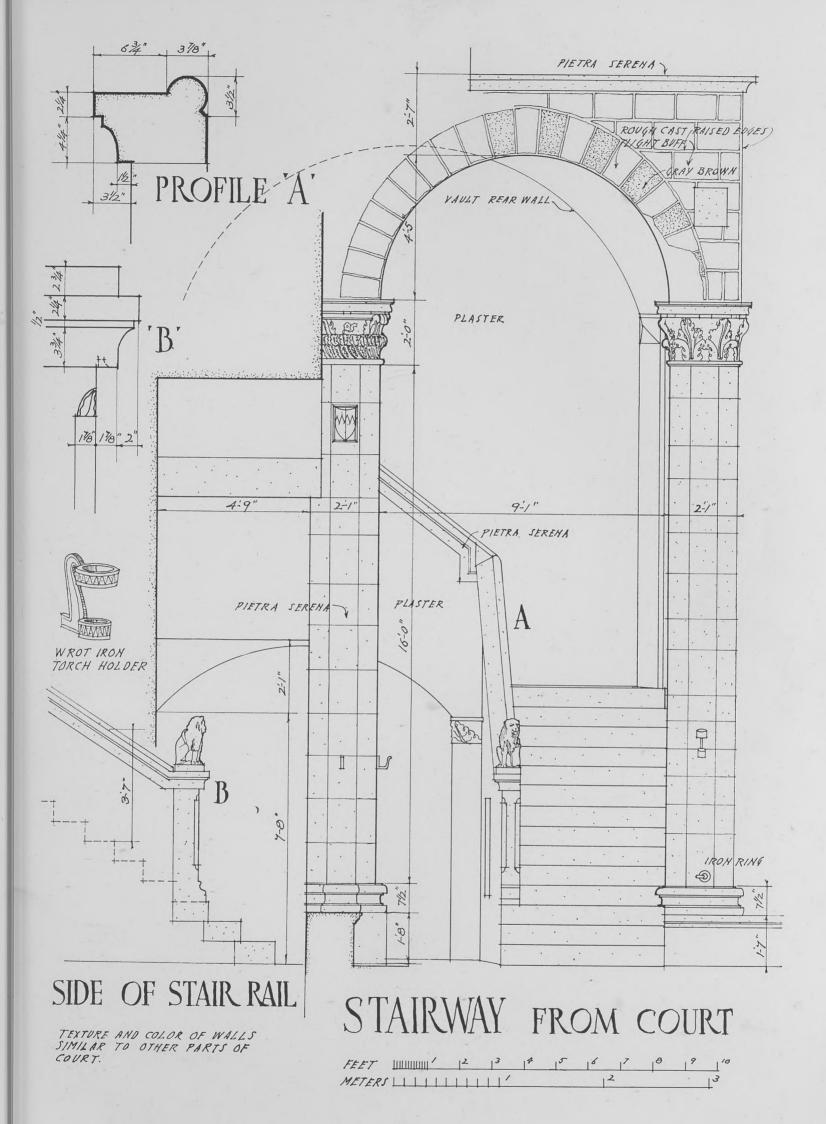
ABOUT 3" ON CENTERS.

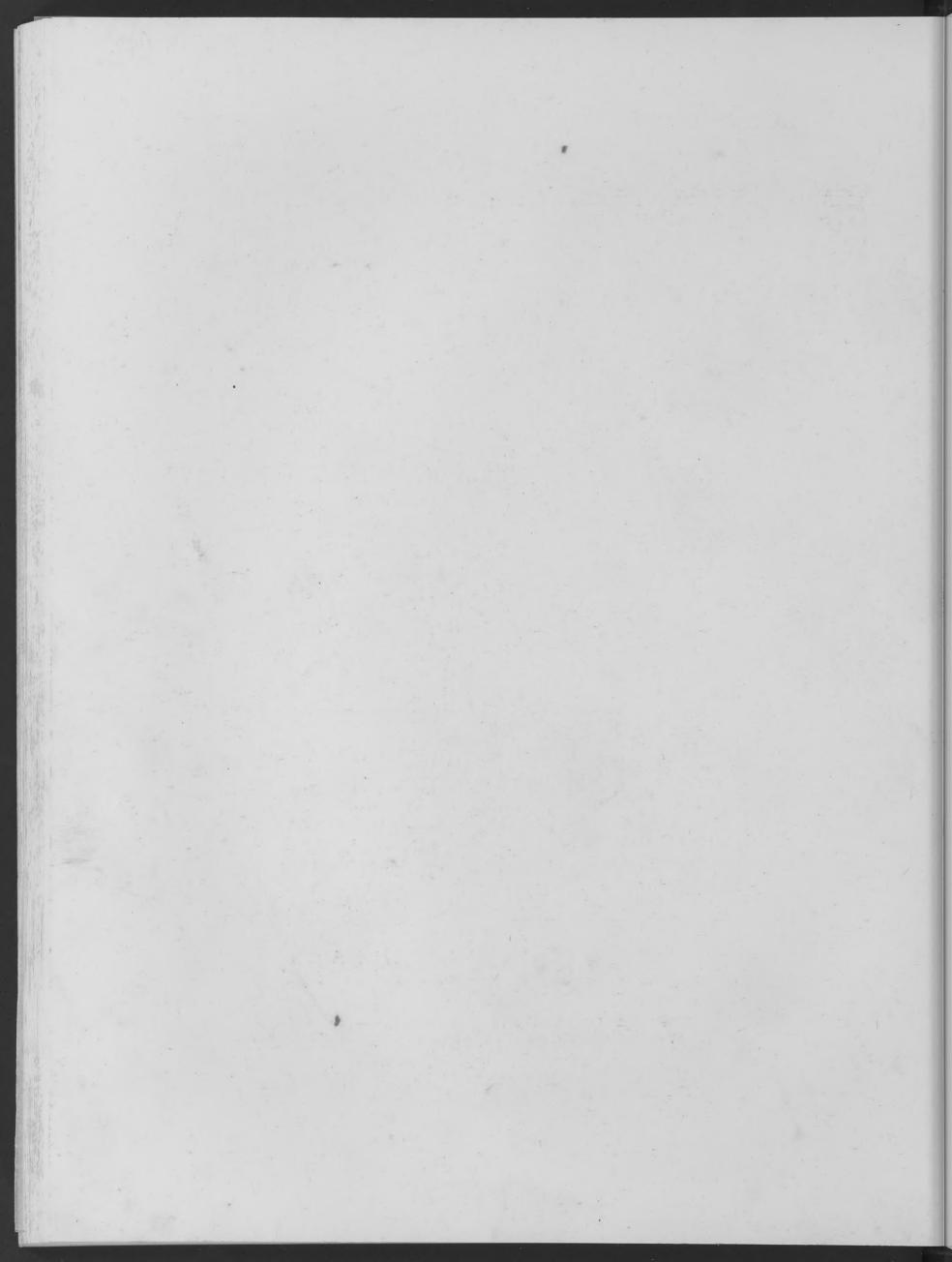
DECORATIONS ON SOUTH

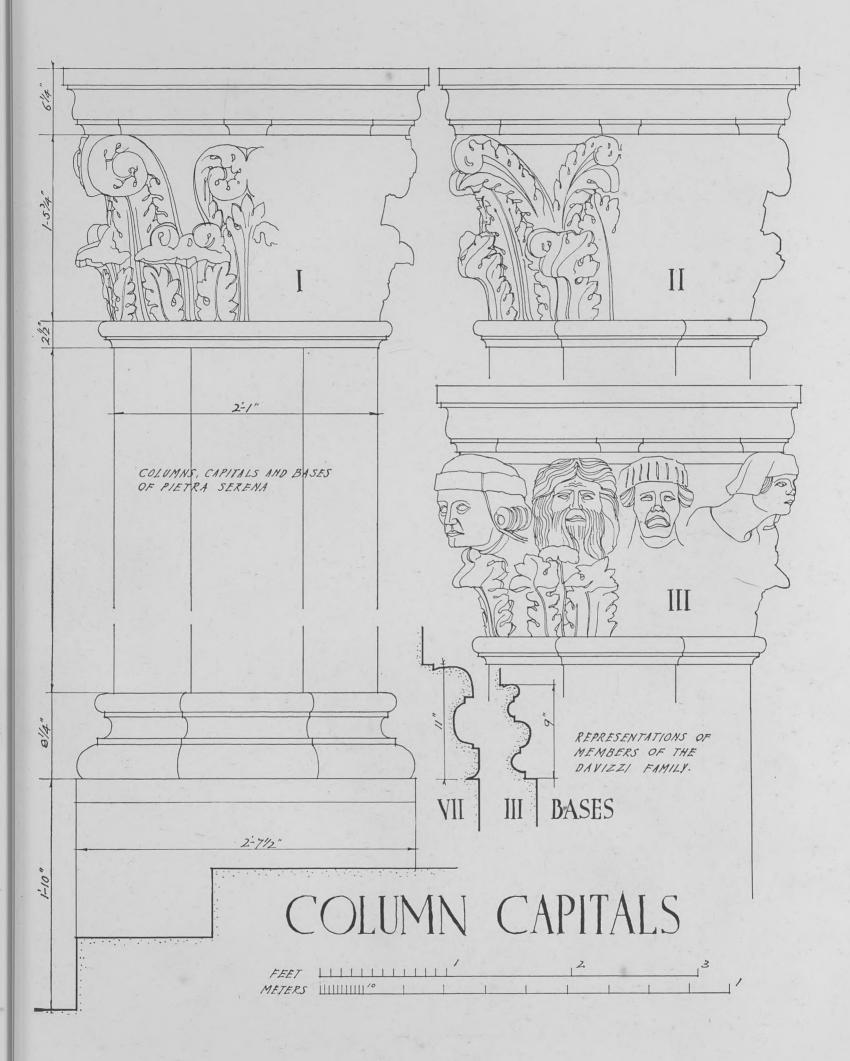
WALL IN RED AND BLACK





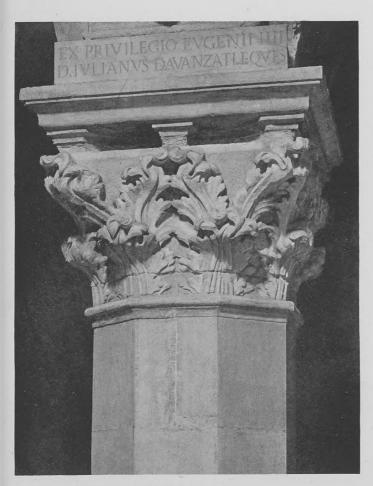








CAPITAL I



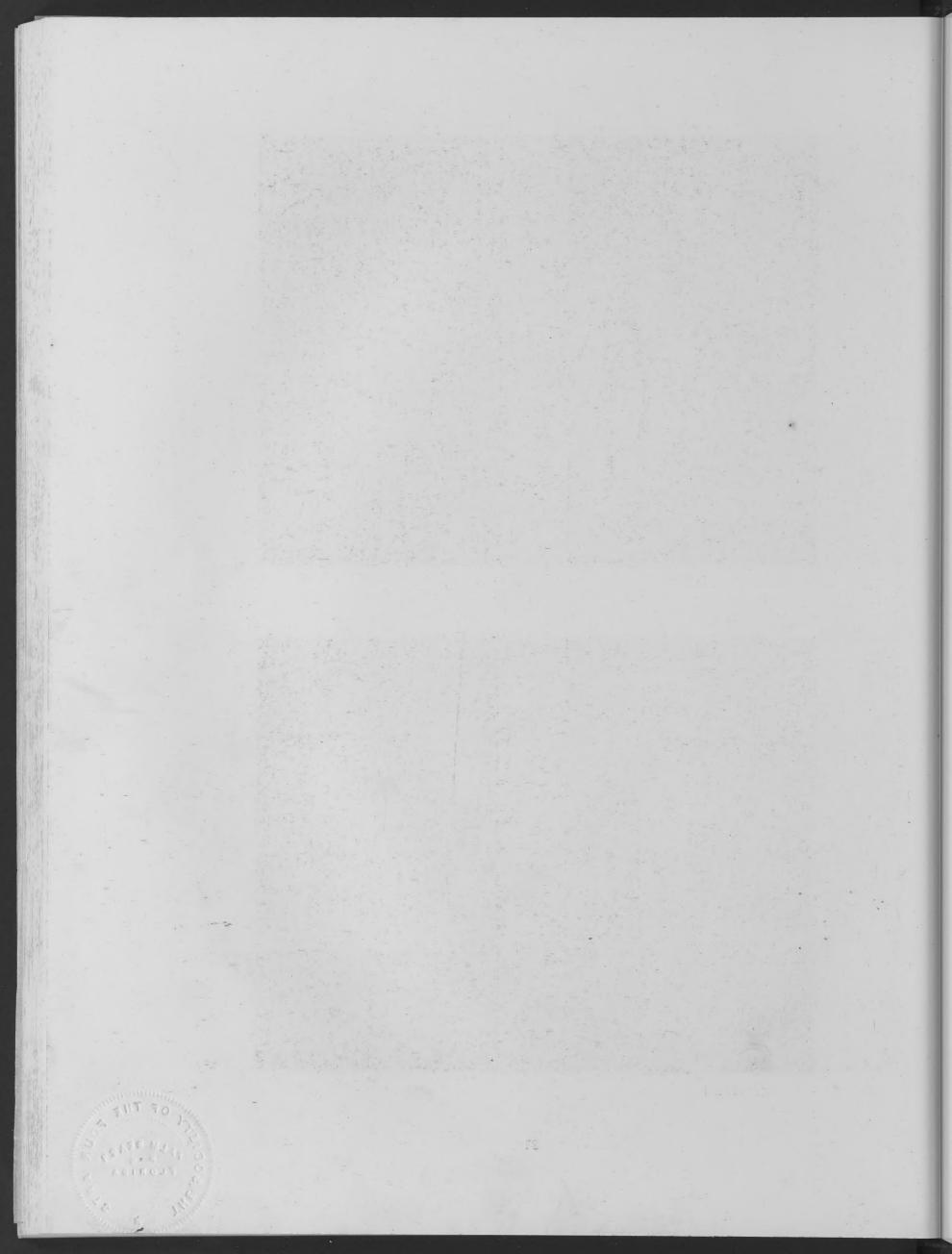
CAPITAL IV

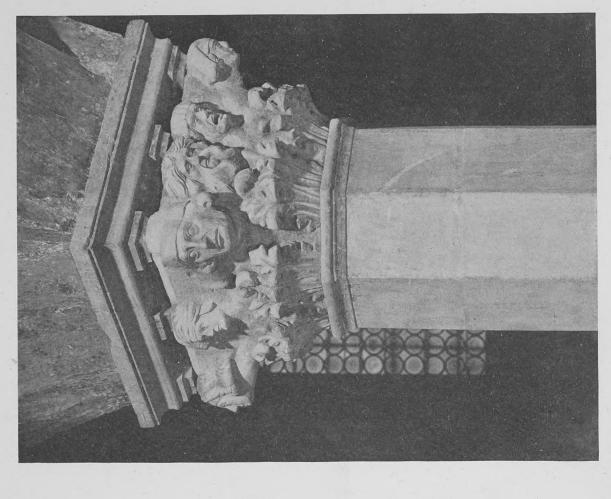


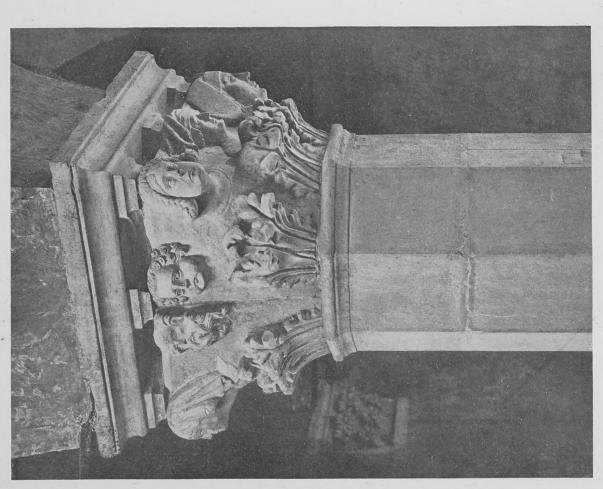
CAPITAL II



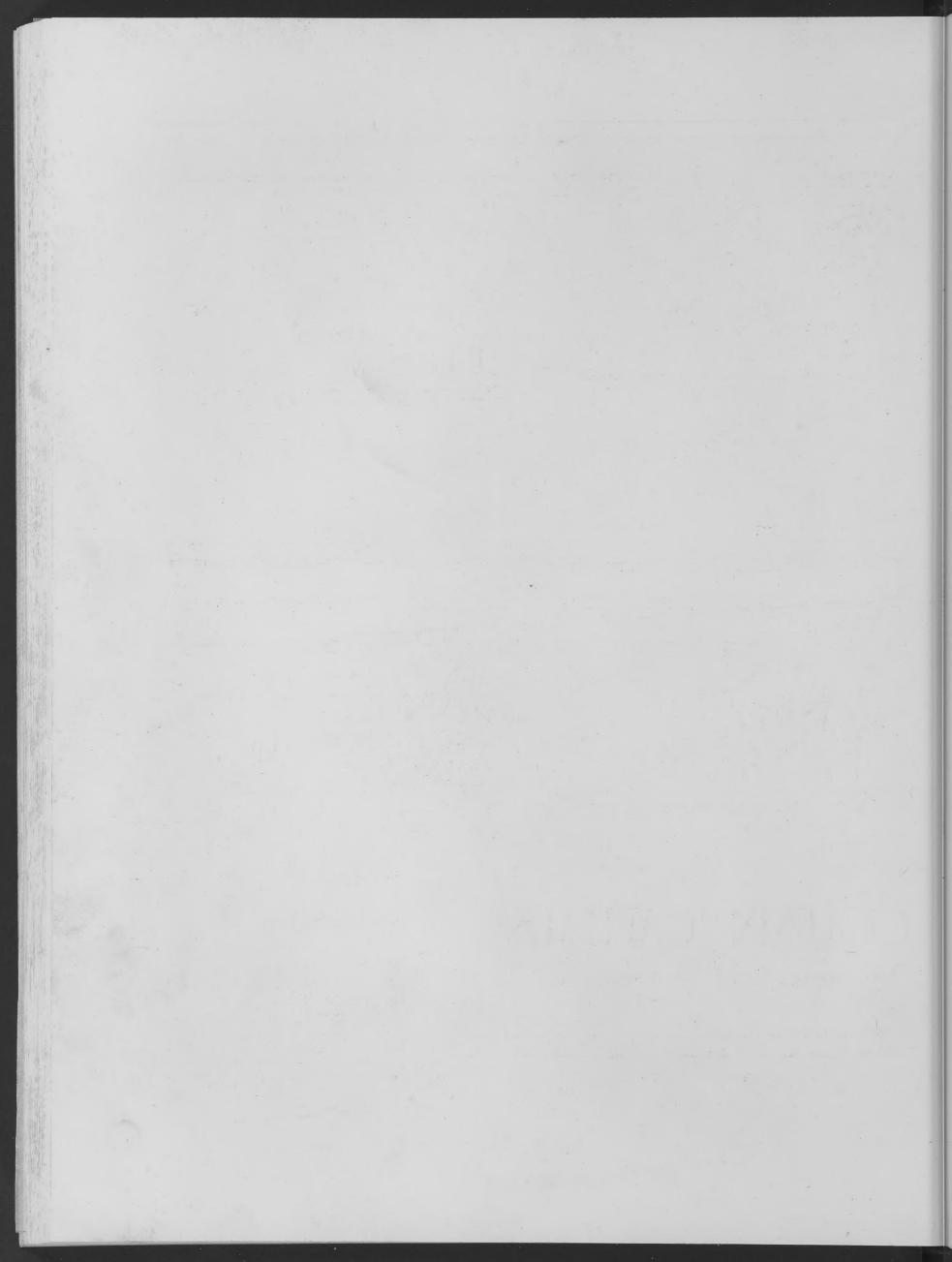
CAPITAL III

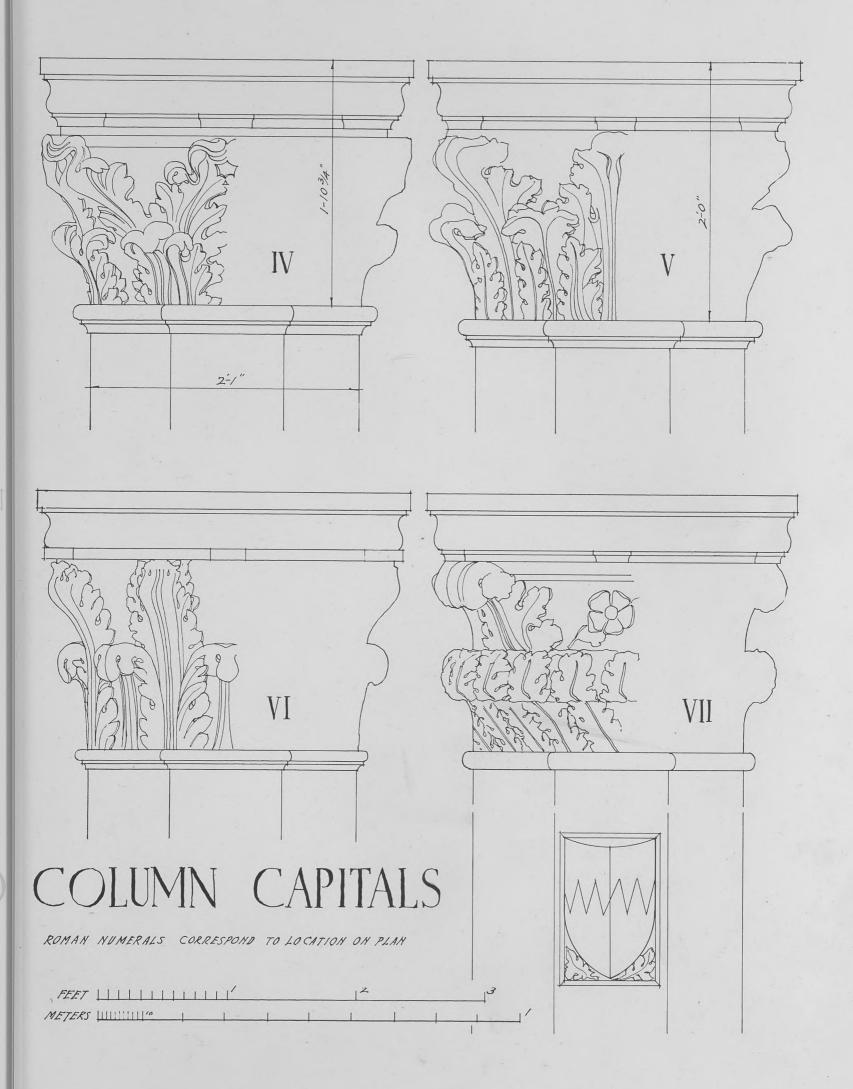


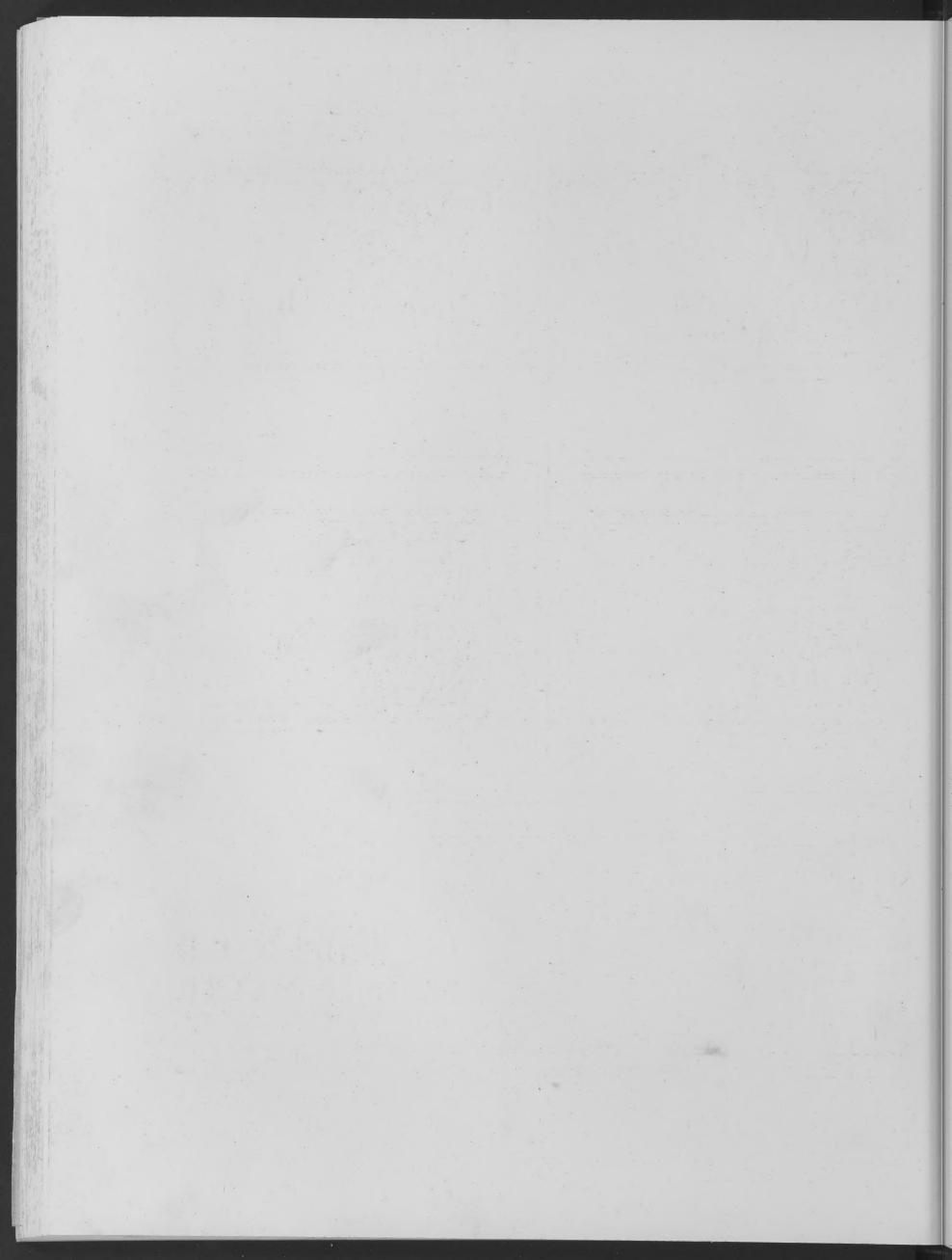


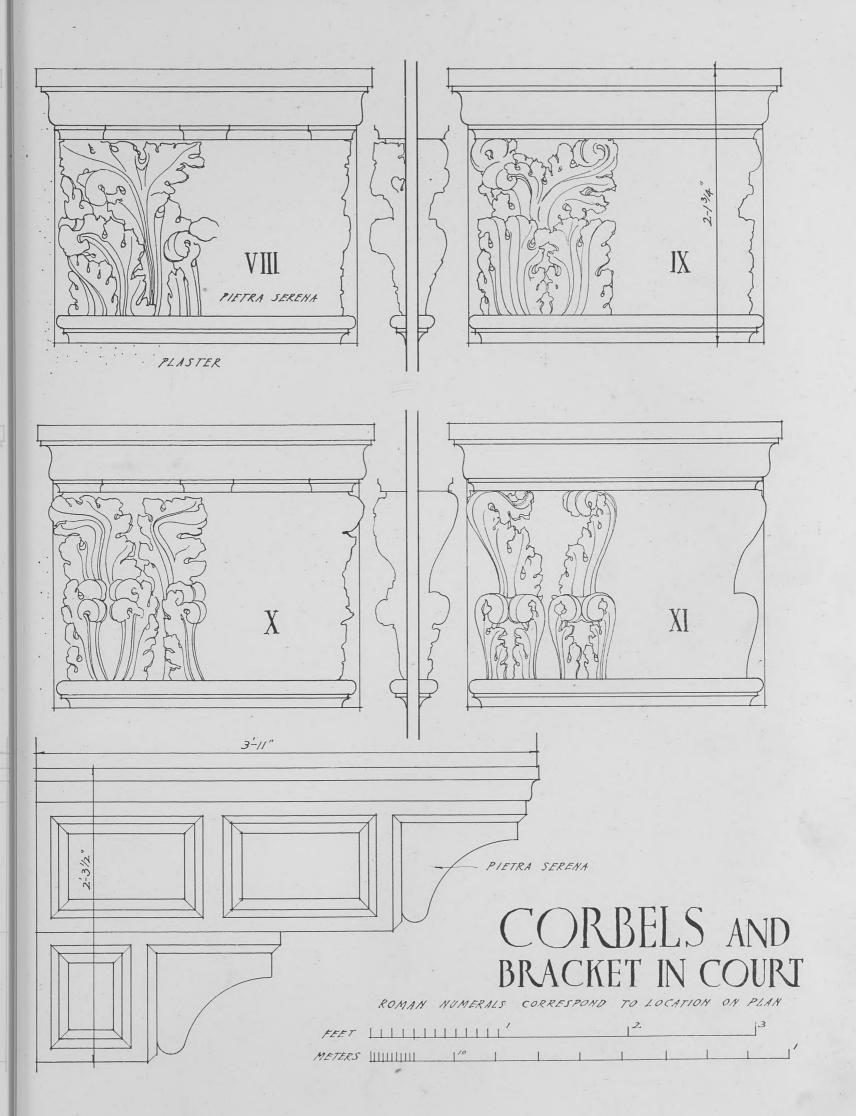


CAPITAL III, WITH PORTRAITS OF THE DAVIZZI FAMILY

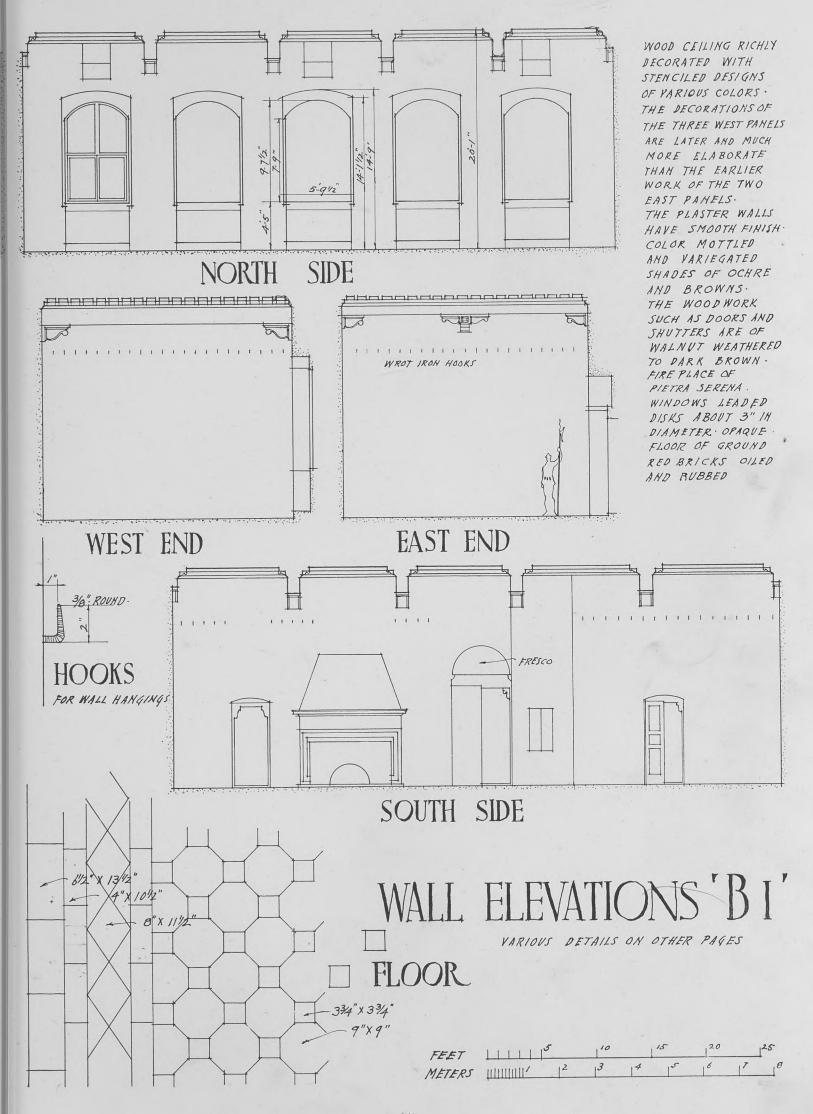


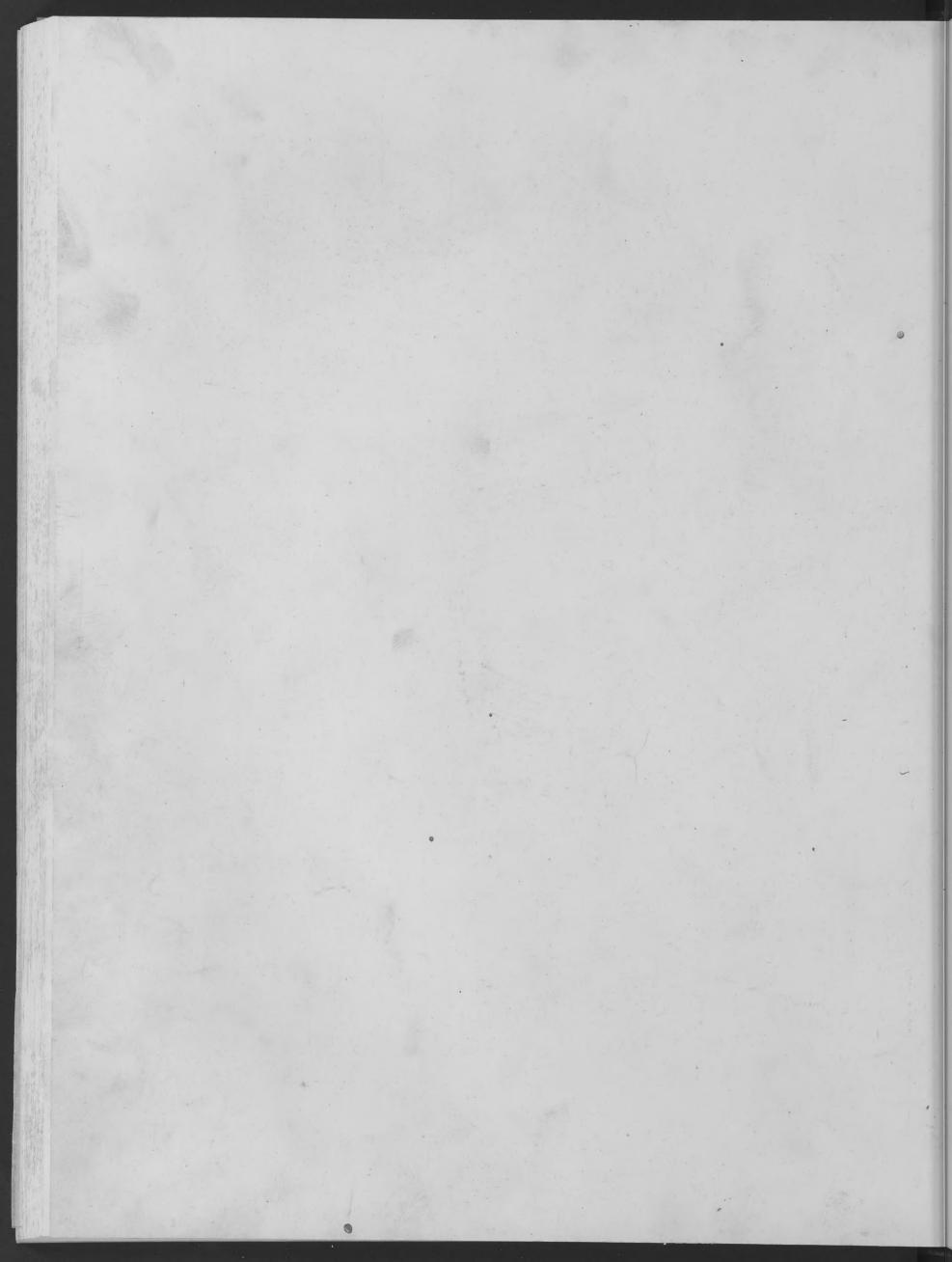


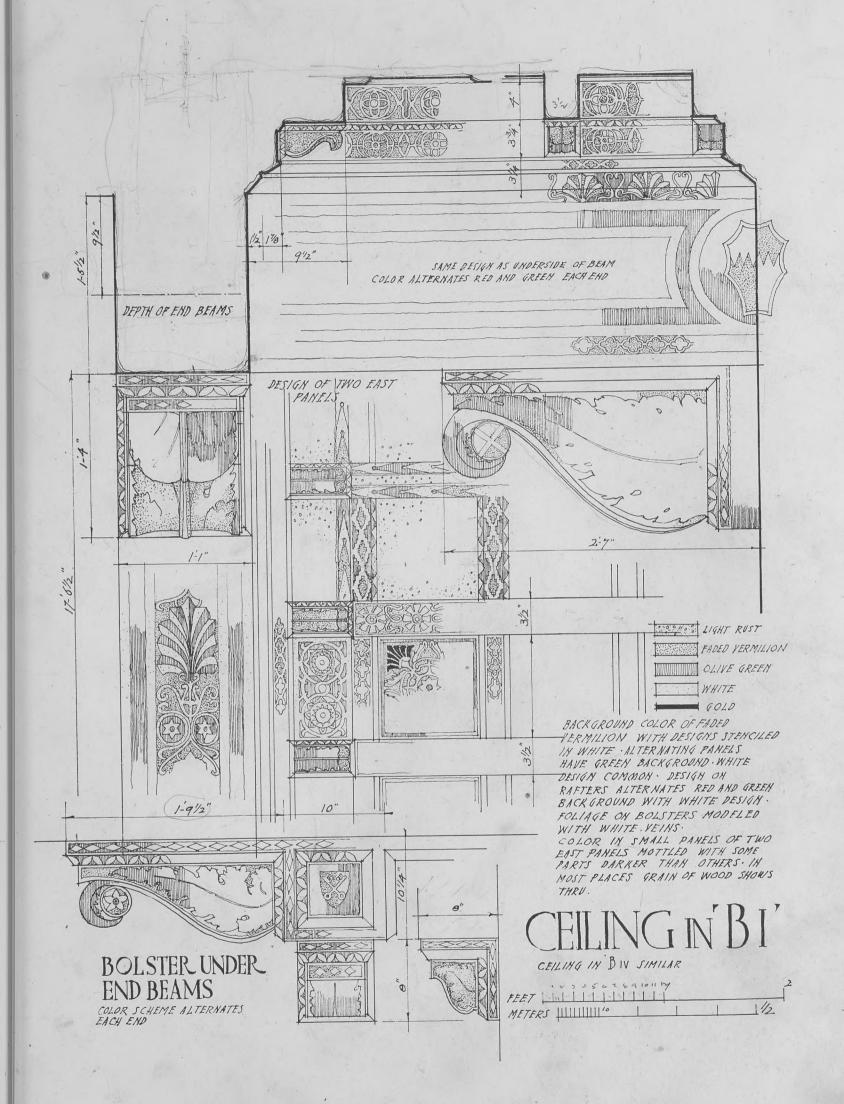


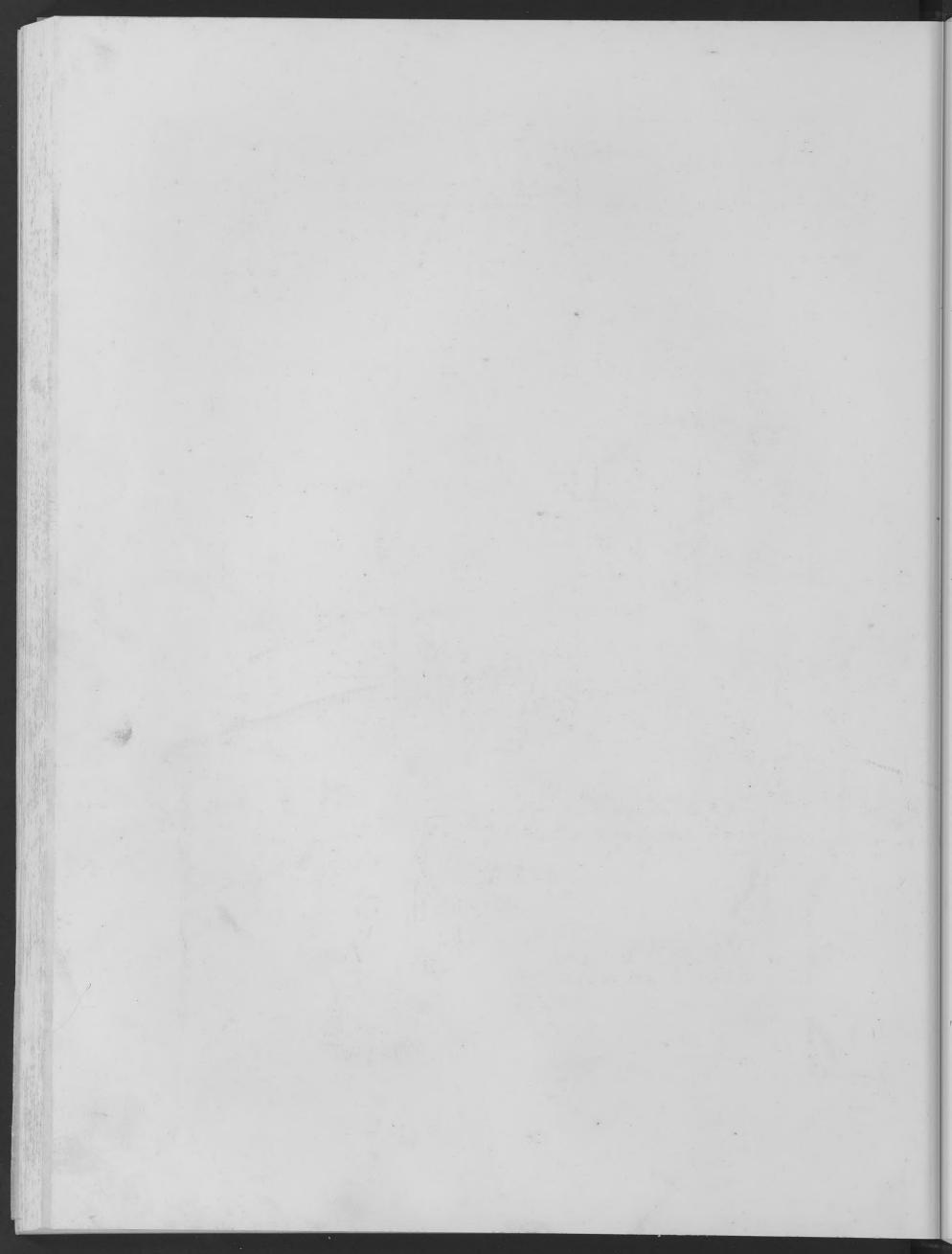


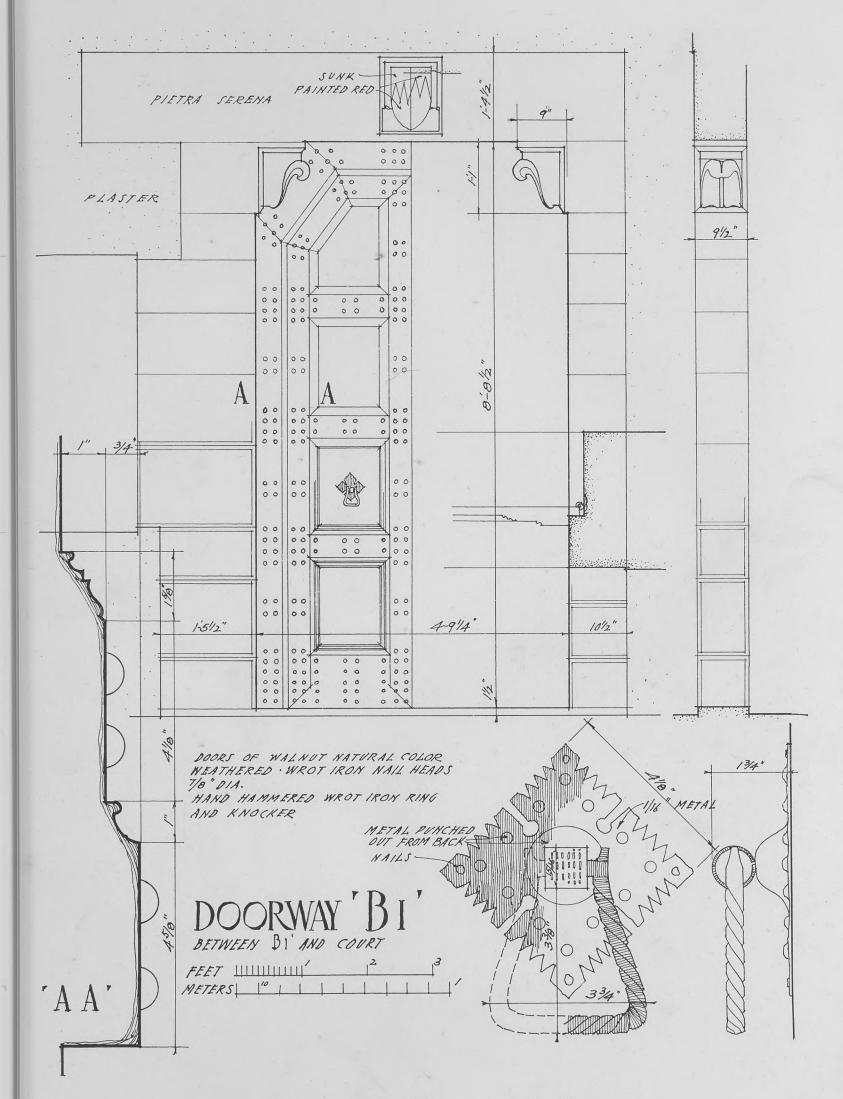




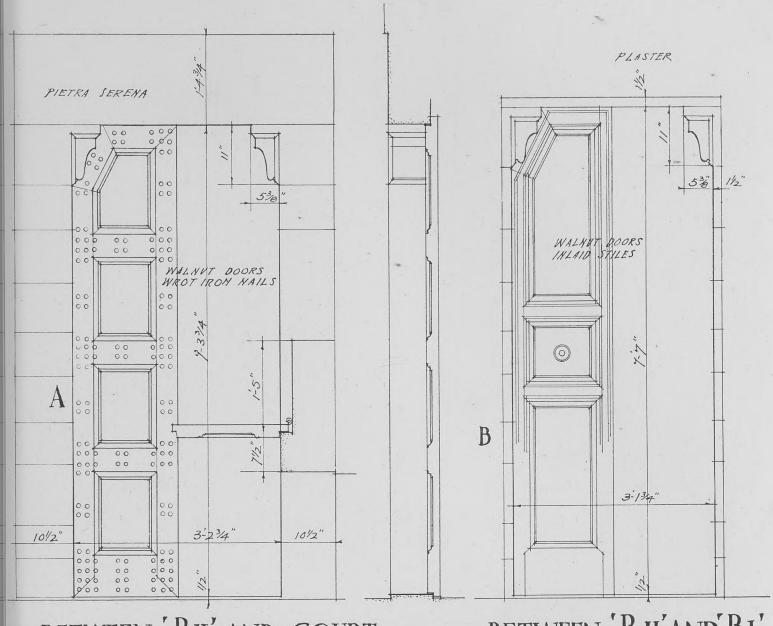






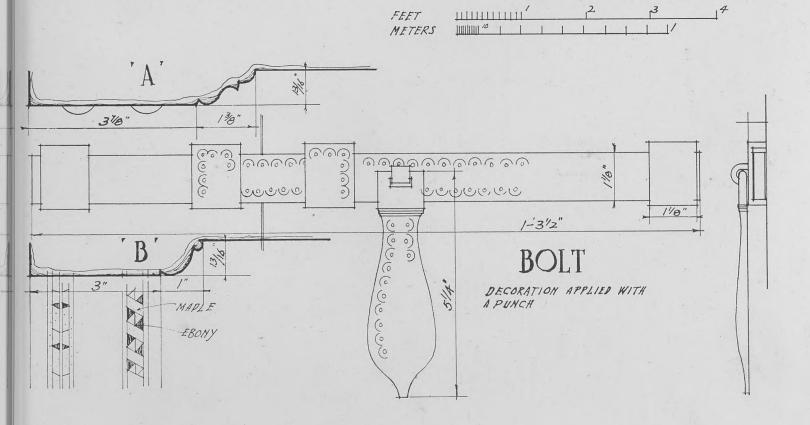




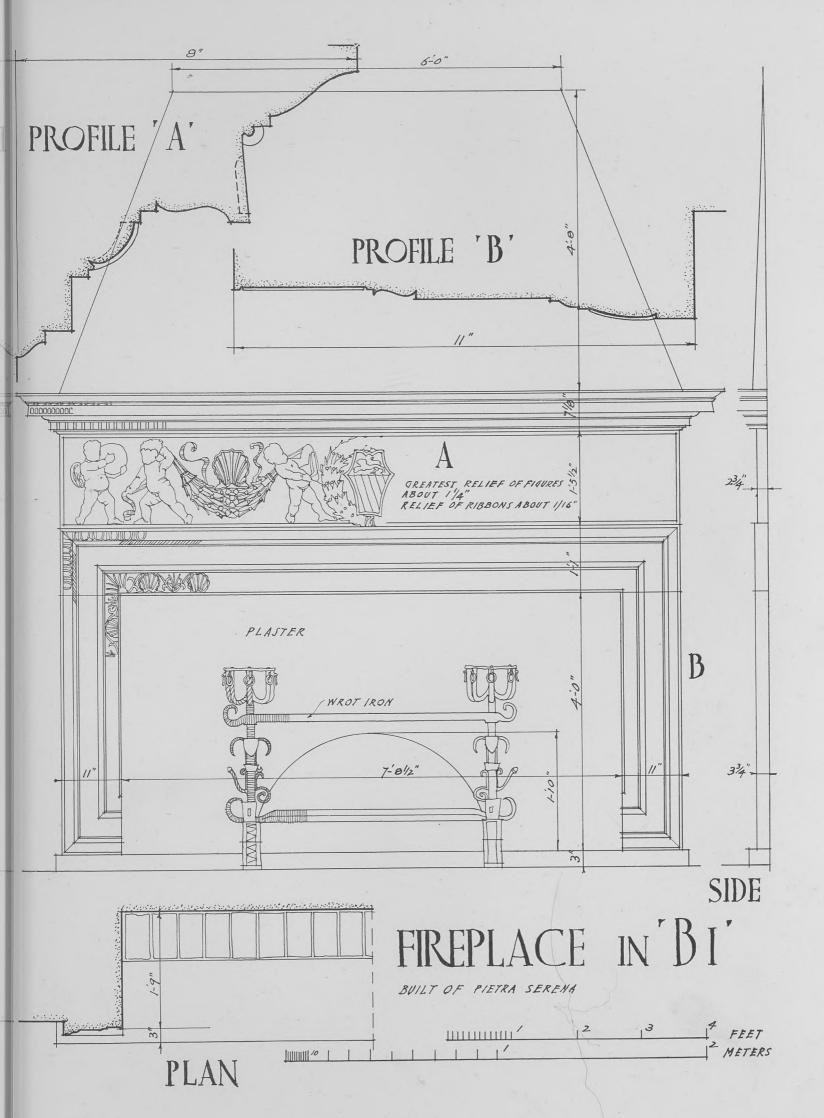


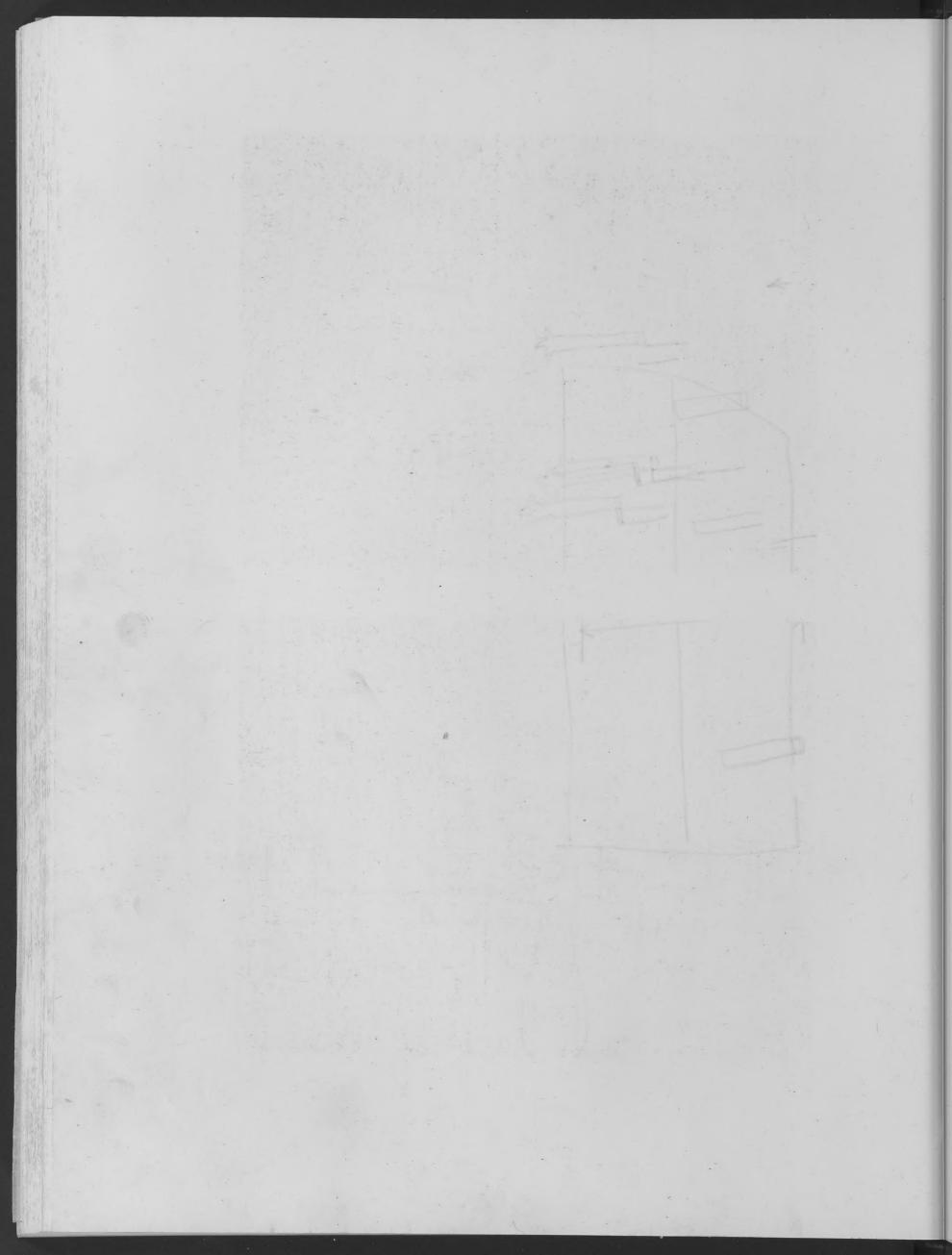
BETWEEN BII AND COURT

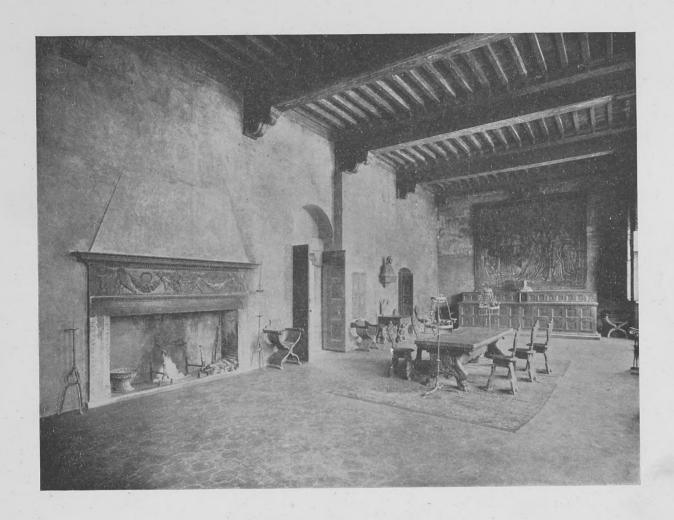
BETWEEN 'BII'AND'BI'





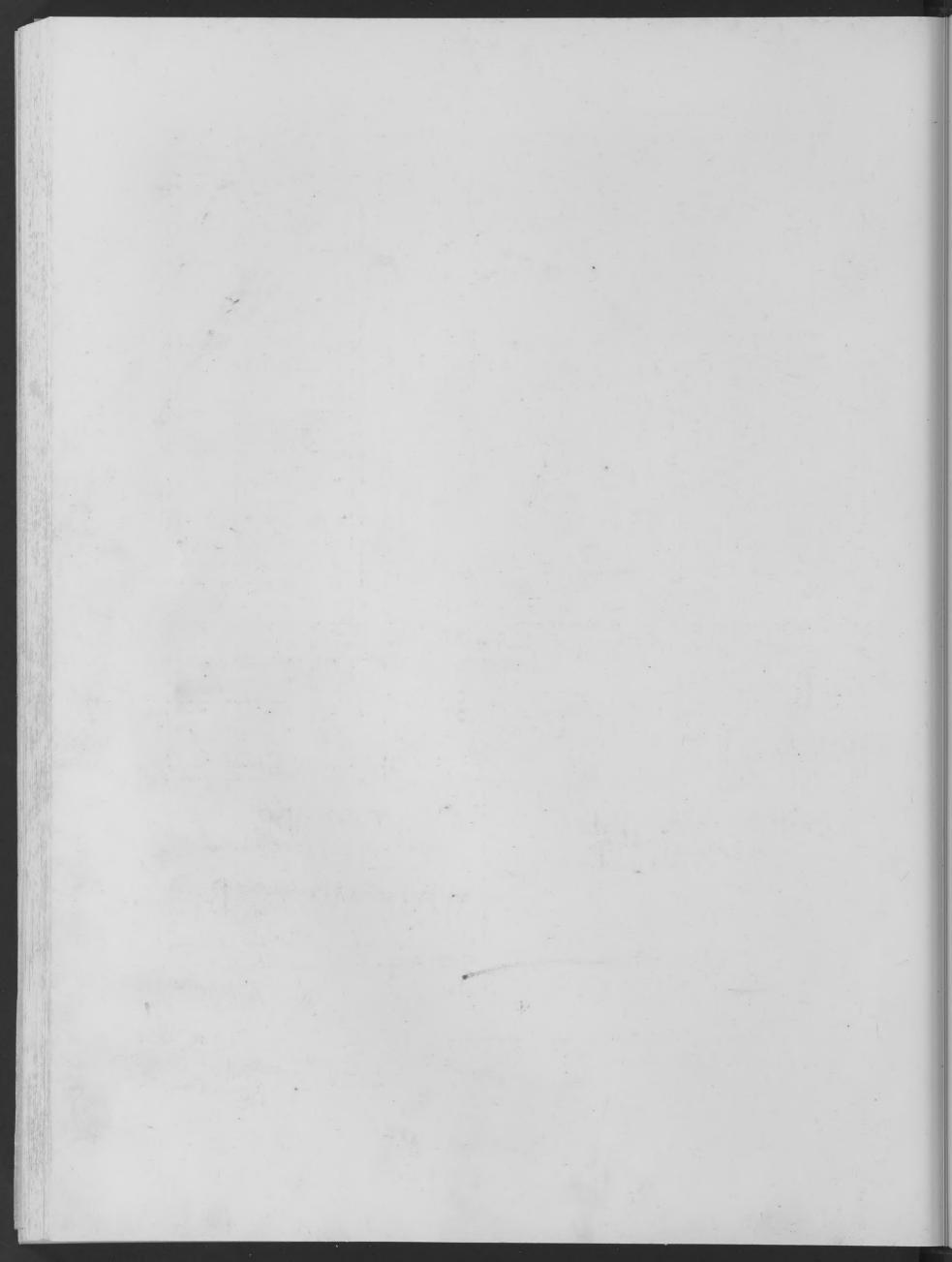


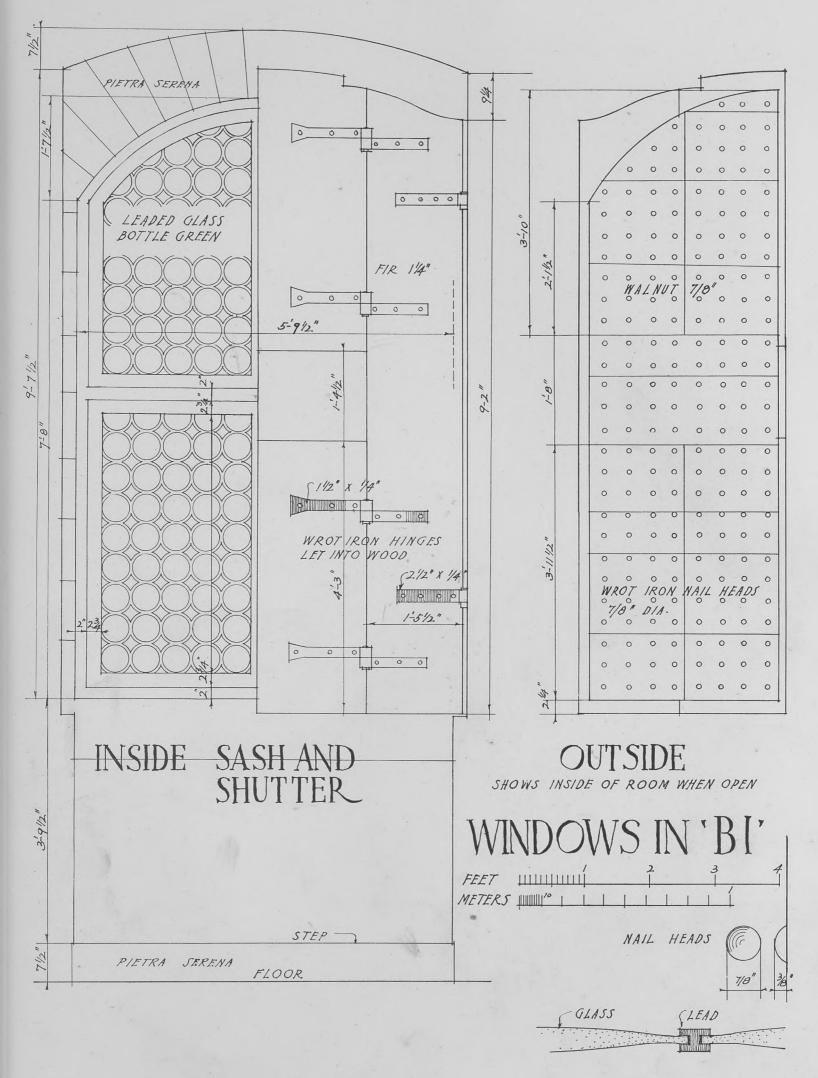


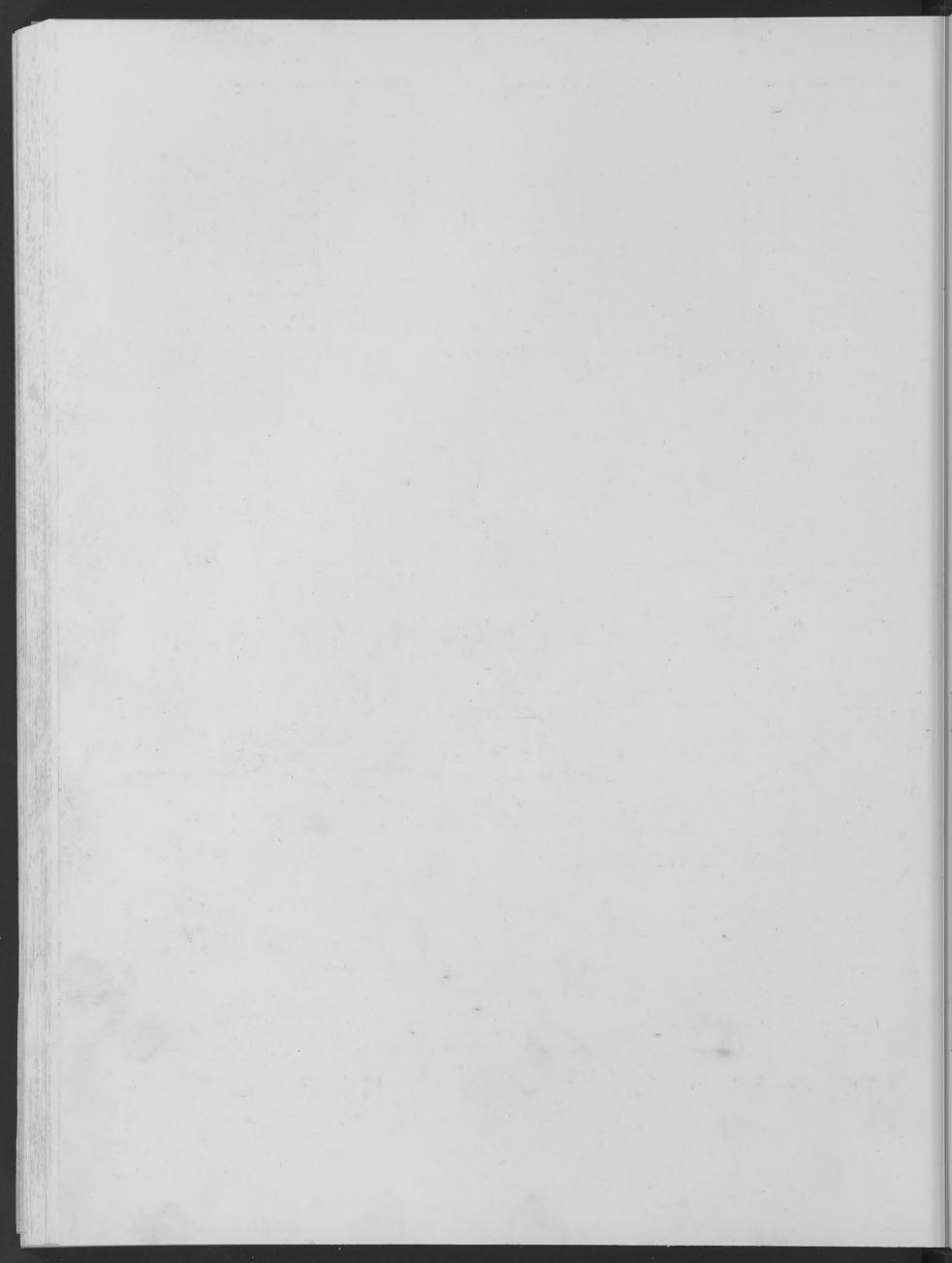


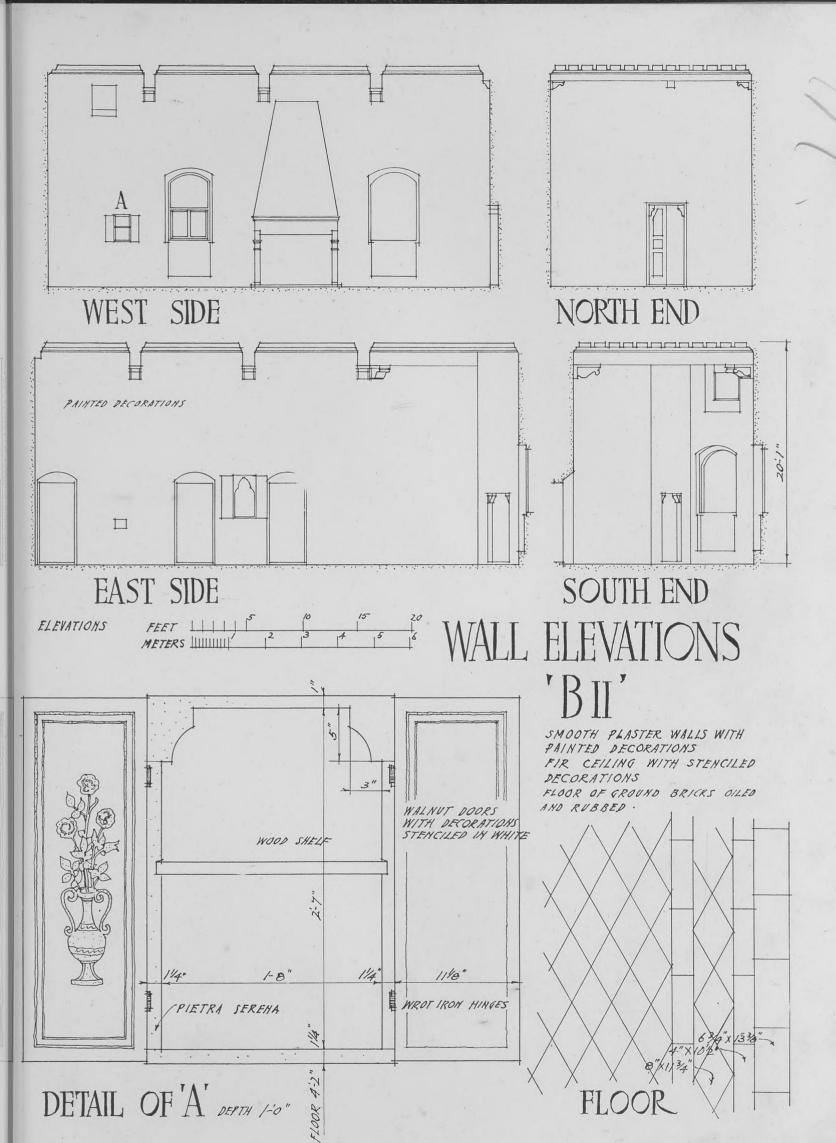


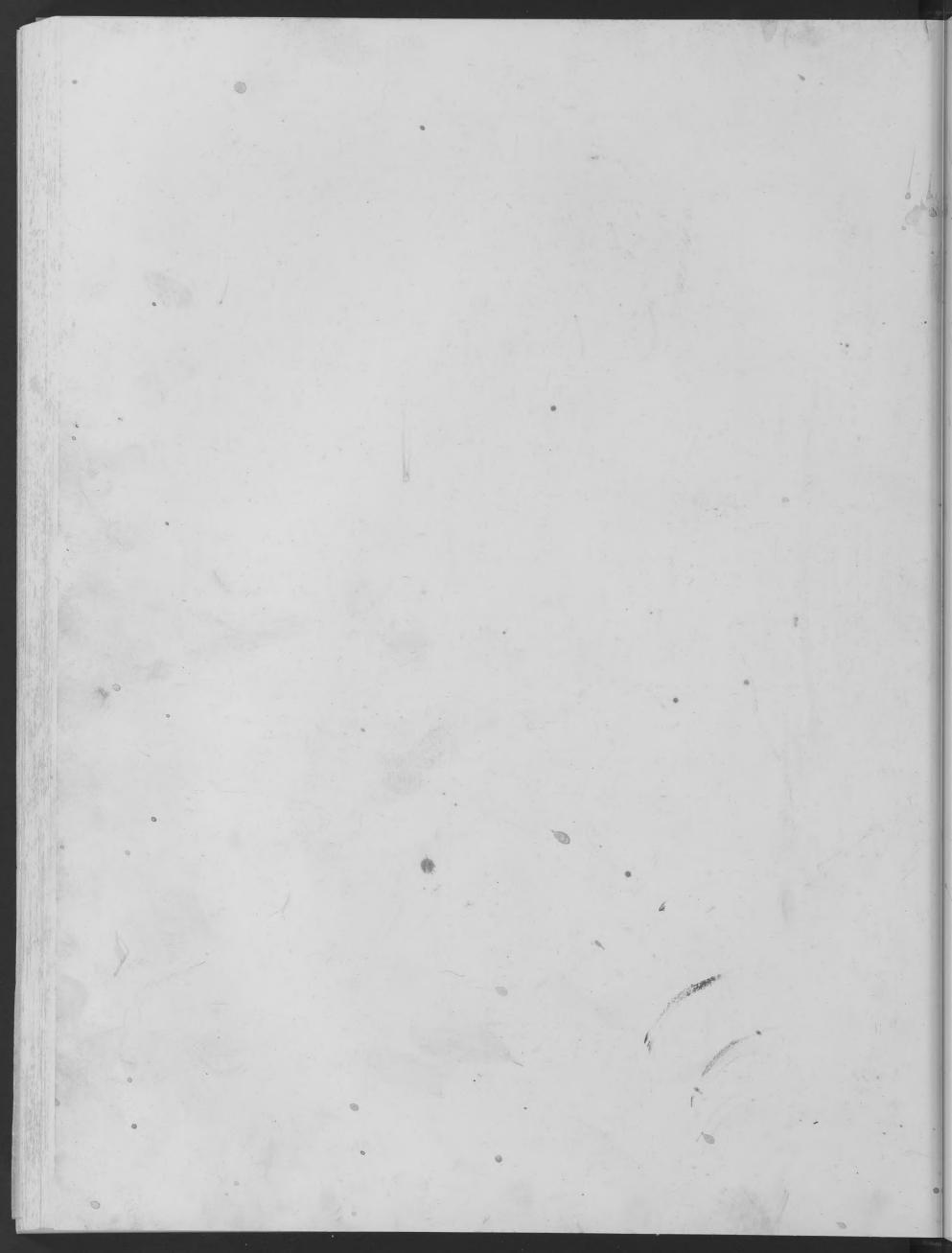
TWO VIEWS IN BI

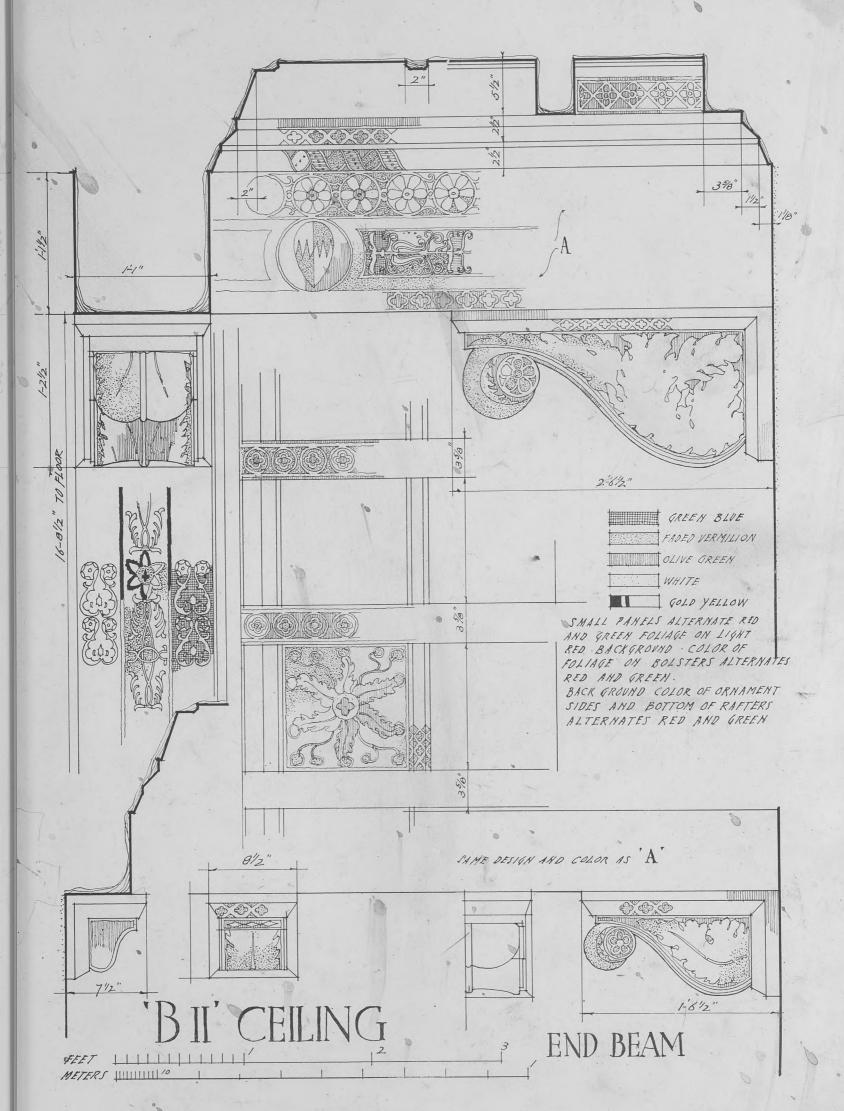


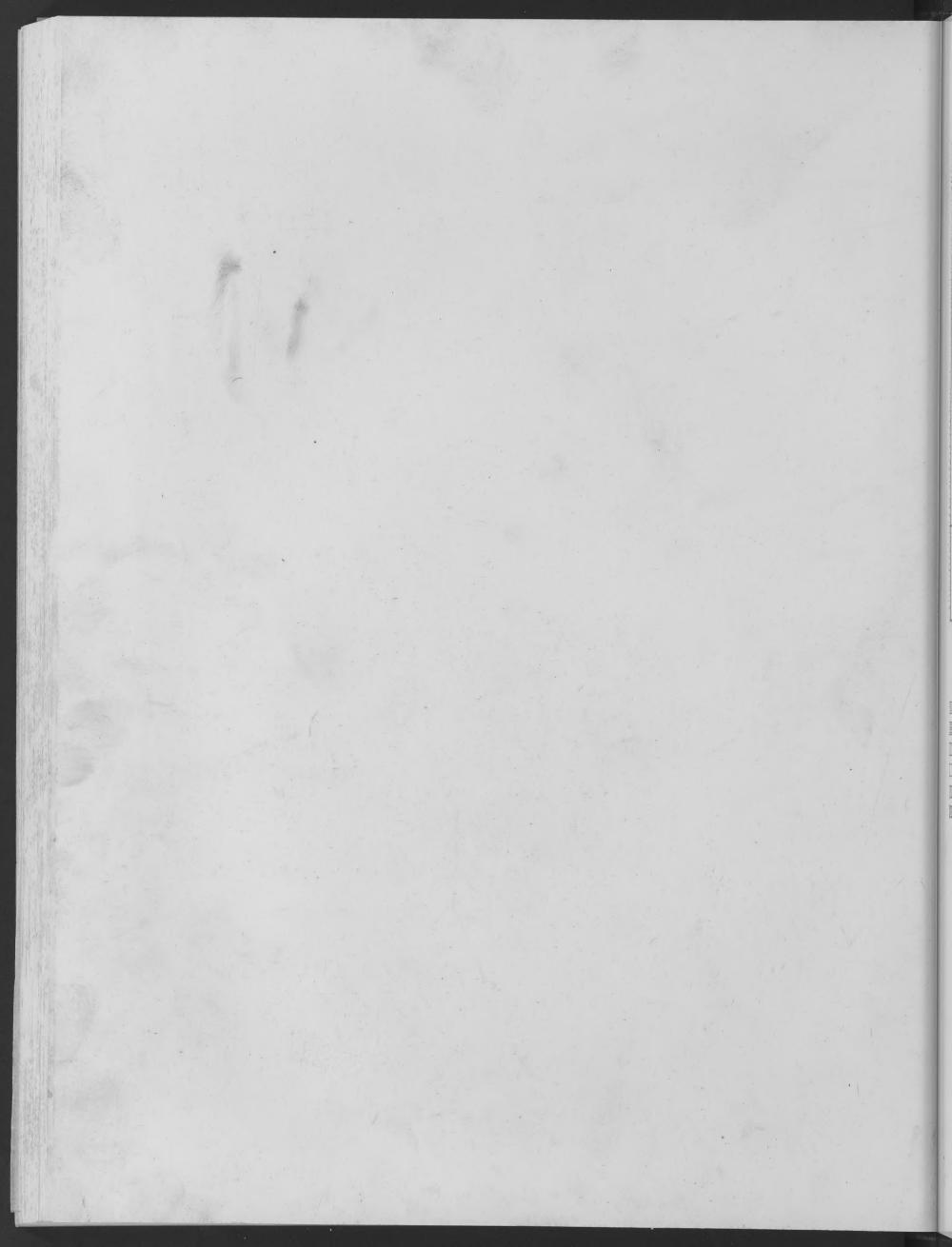


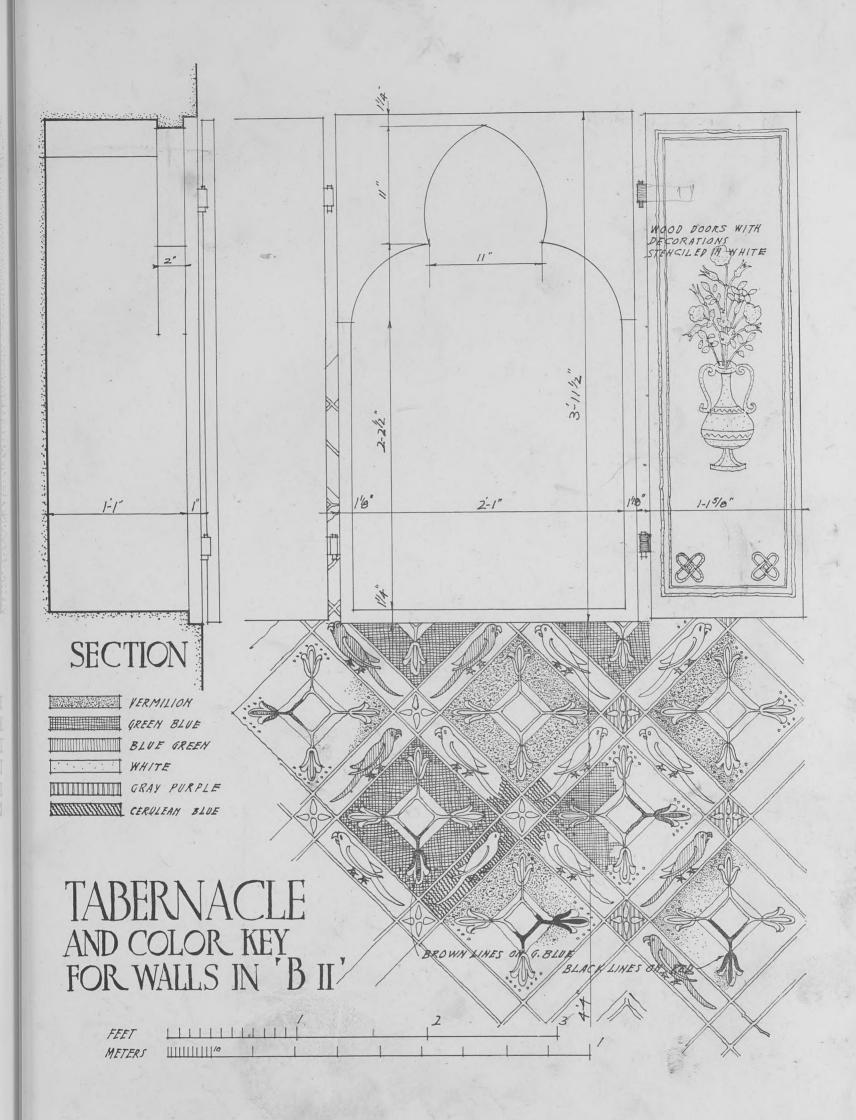


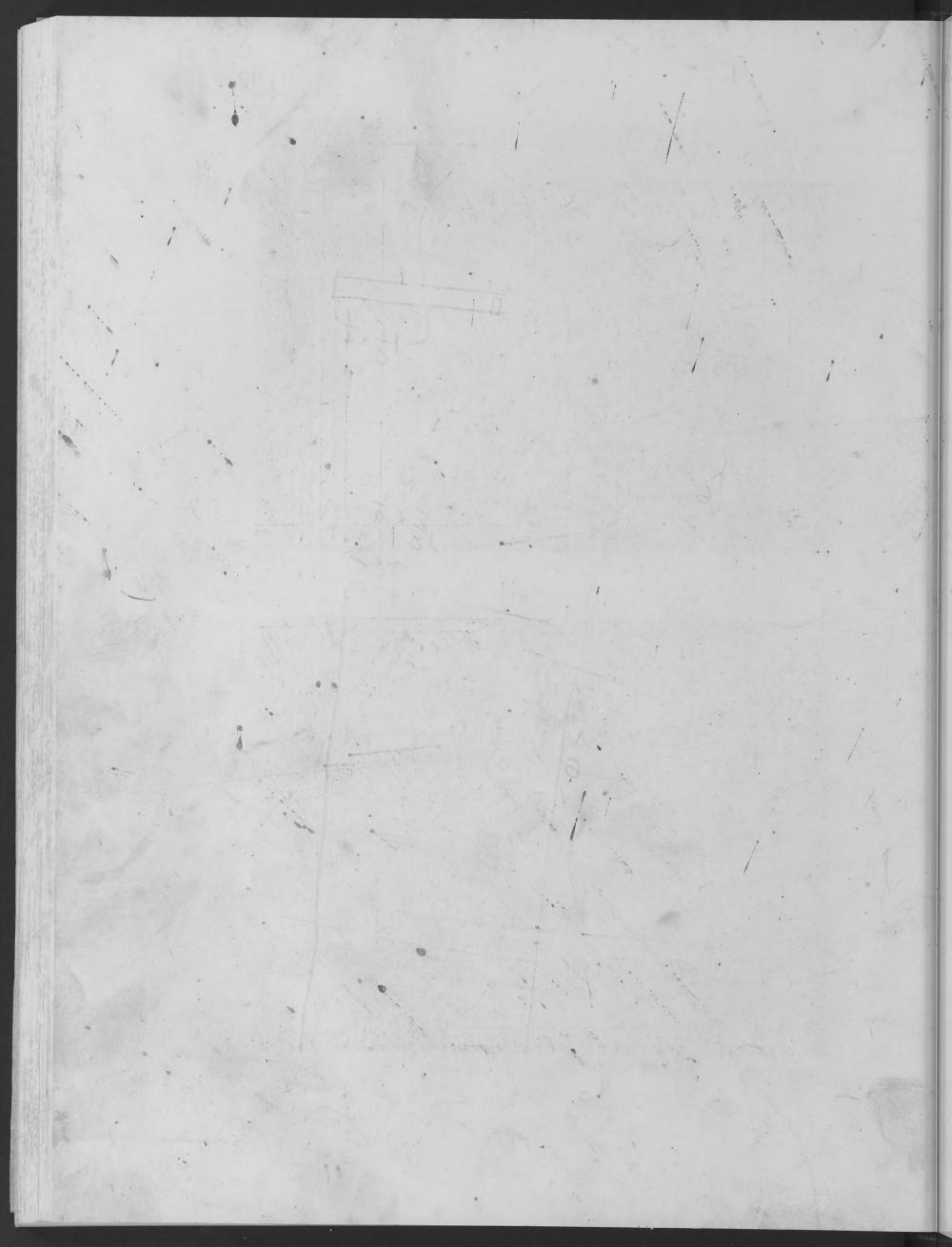


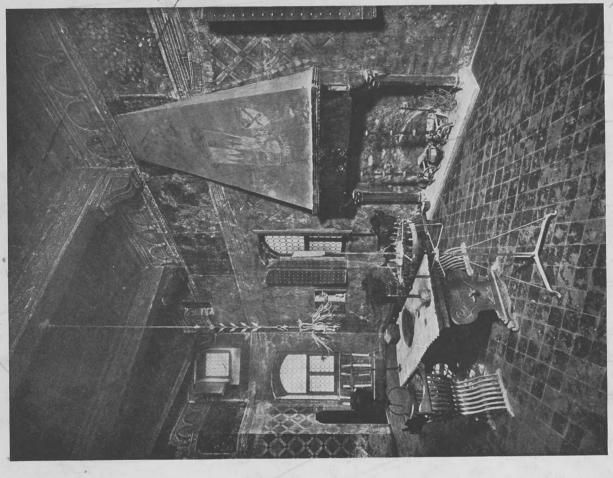








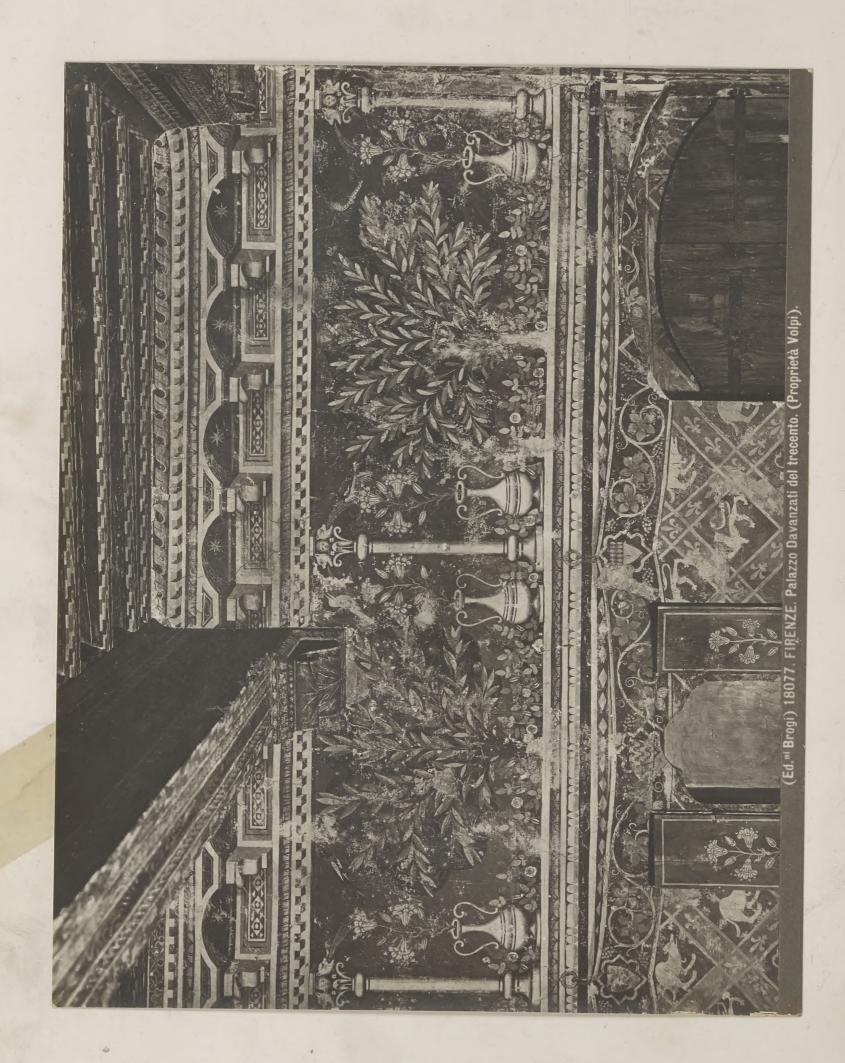


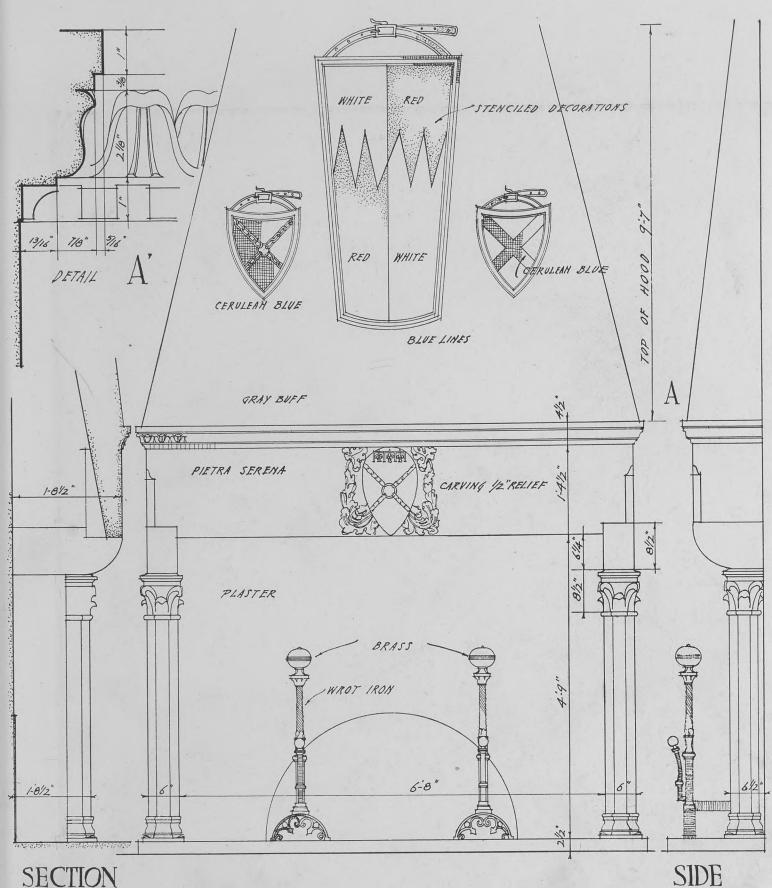


ROOM OF THE PARROTS, BII



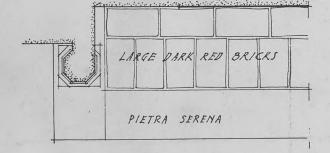
TABERNACLE IN ROOM OF THE PARROTS, BII

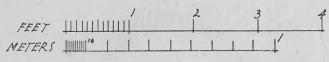


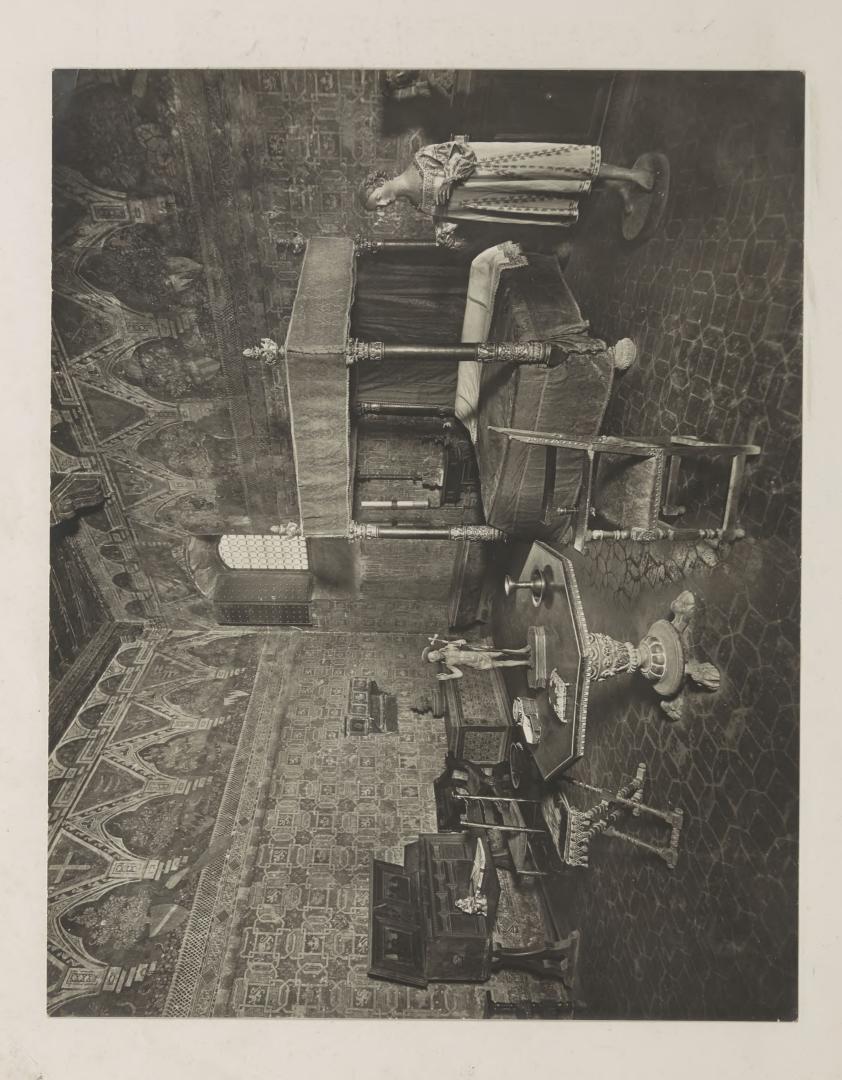


SECTION







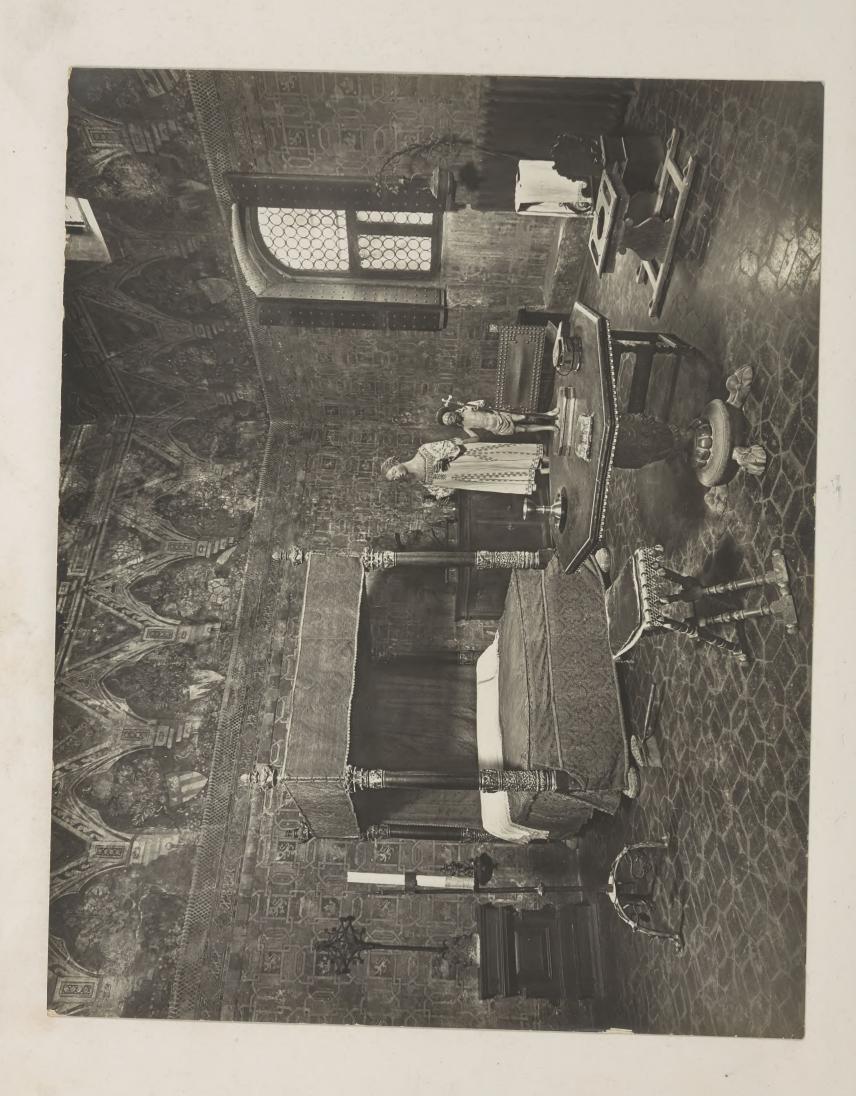


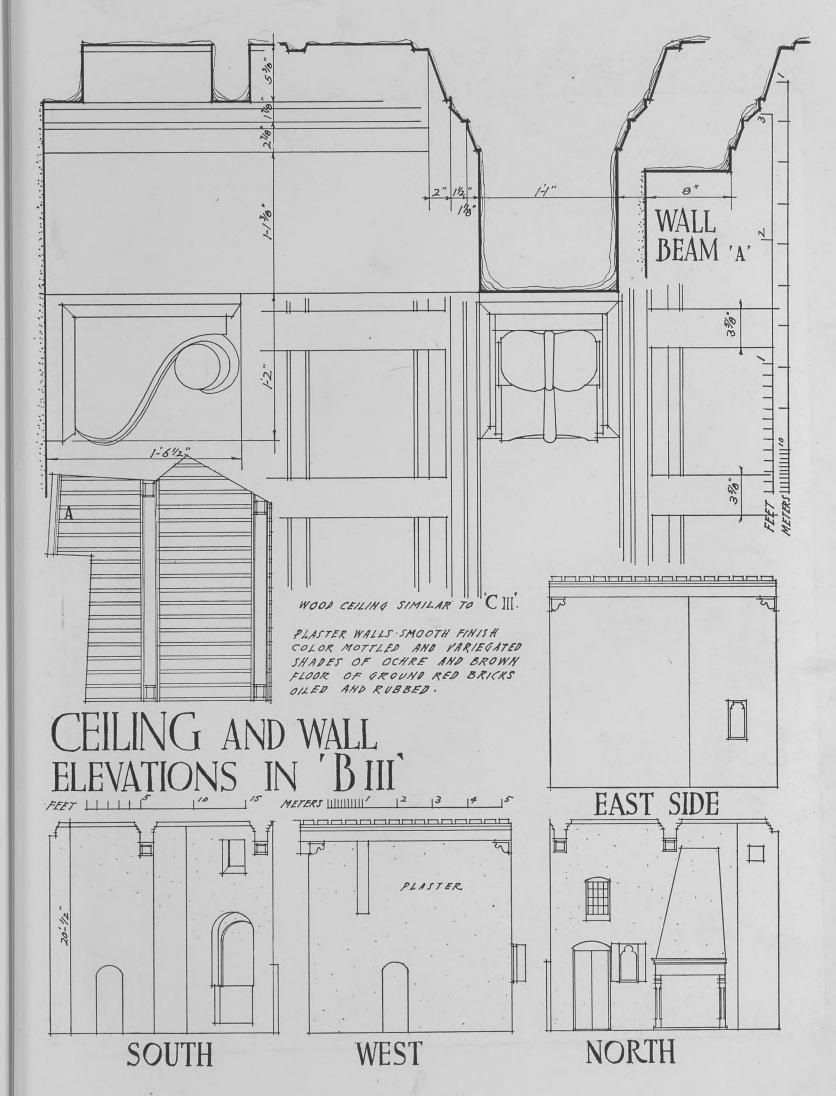


ROOM OF THE PARROTS, BII

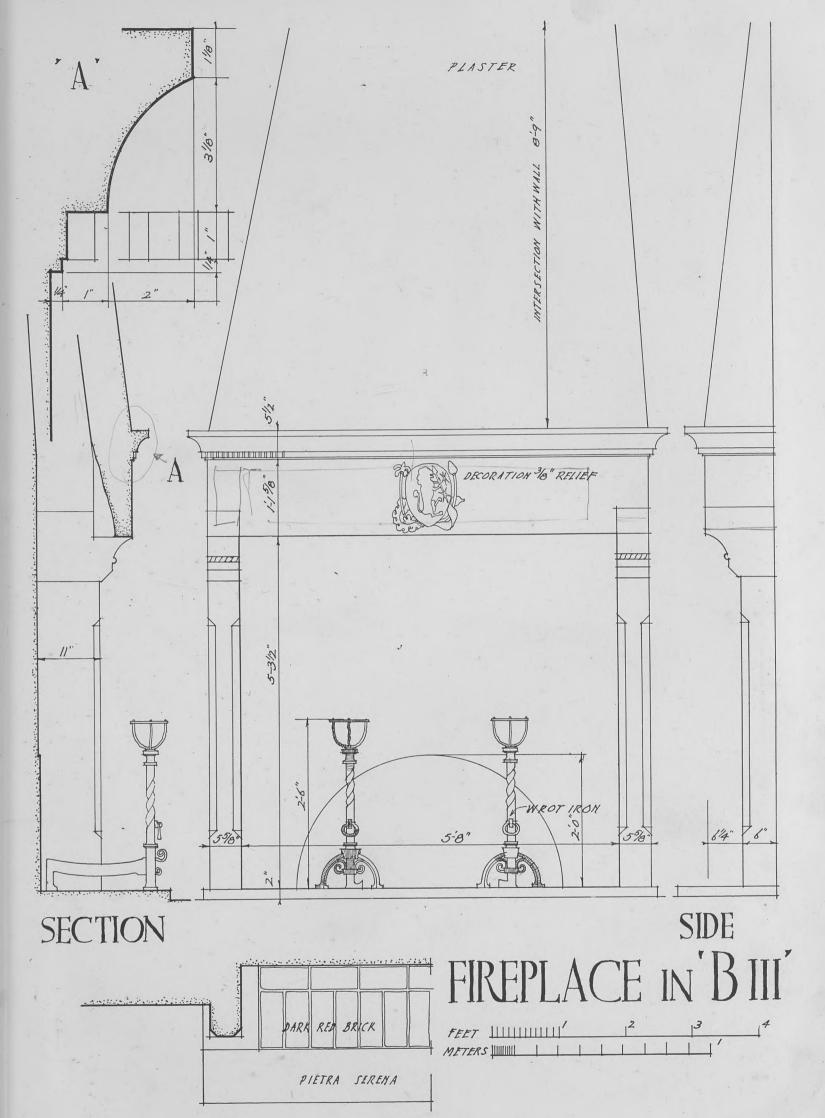


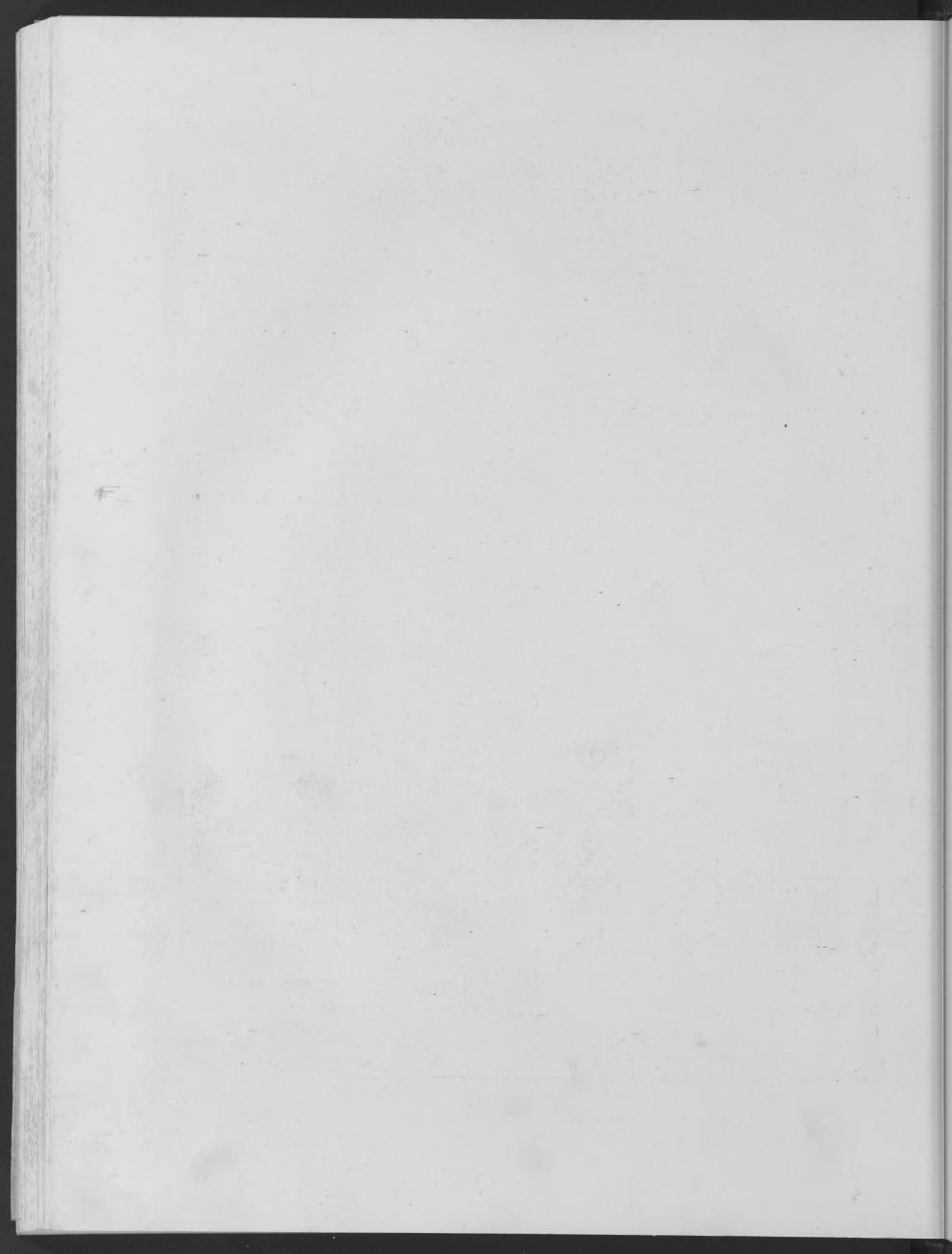
VIEW SHOWING WALL DECORATION, BIV

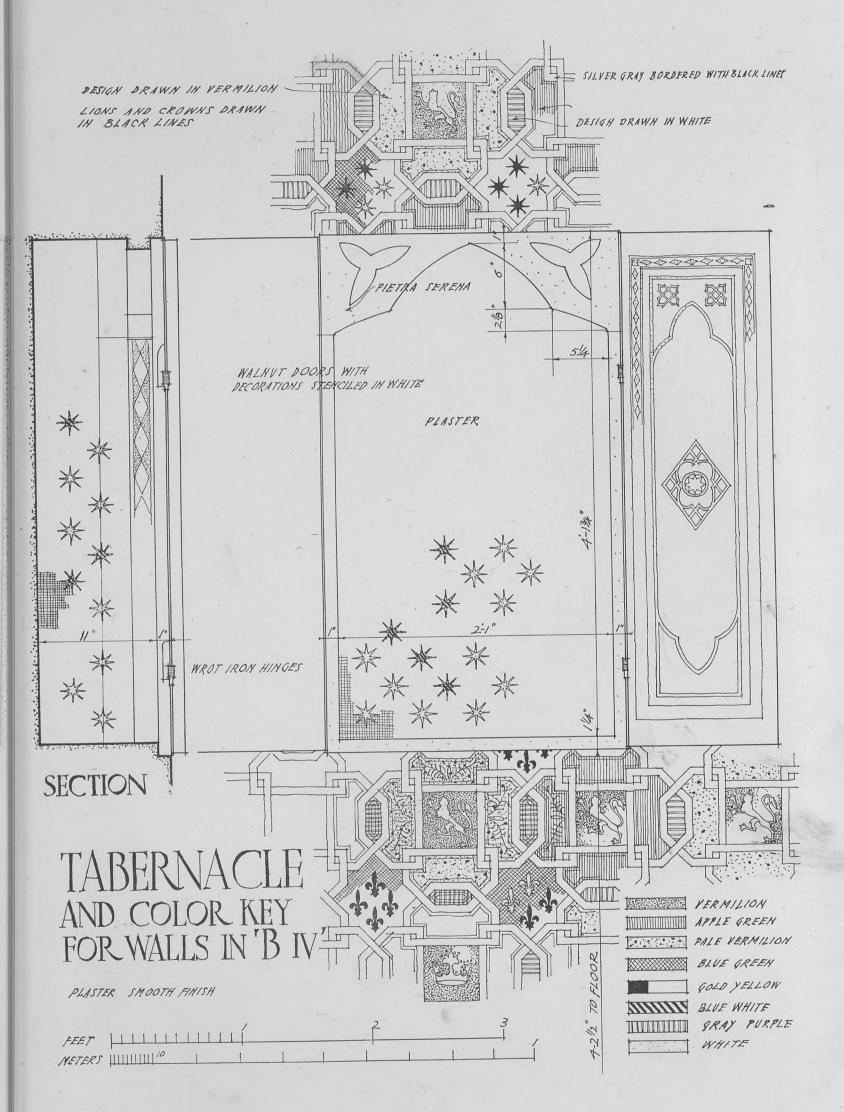


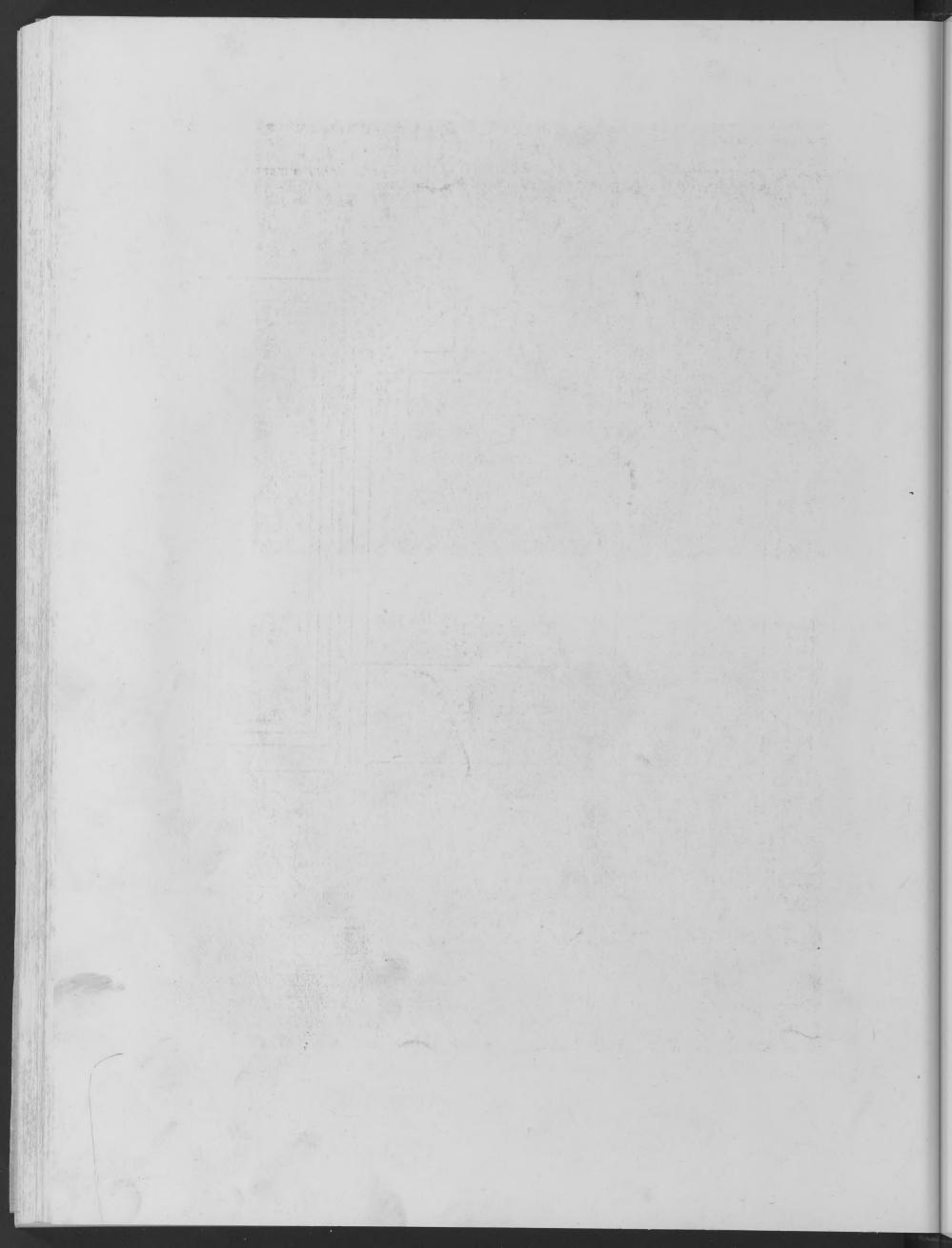














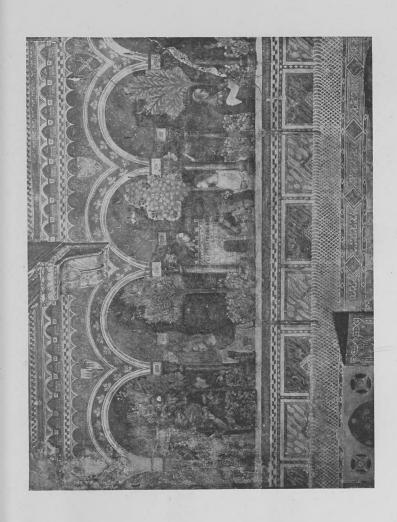
TABERNACLE IN BIV

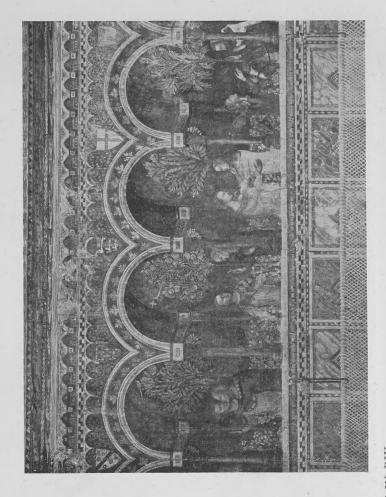


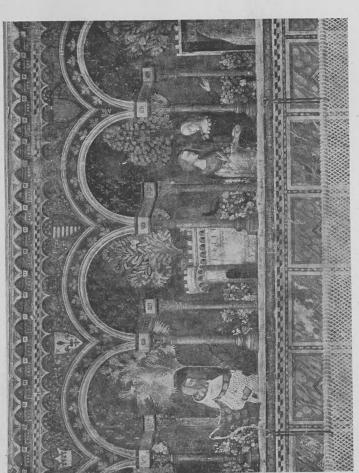
TABERNACLE IN CIV

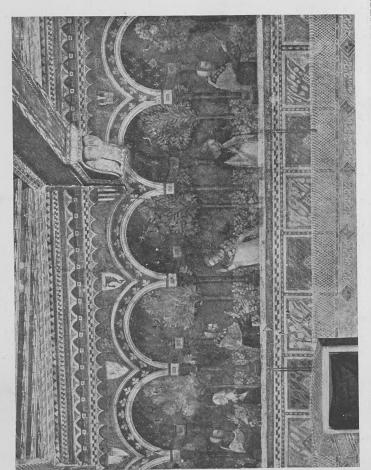


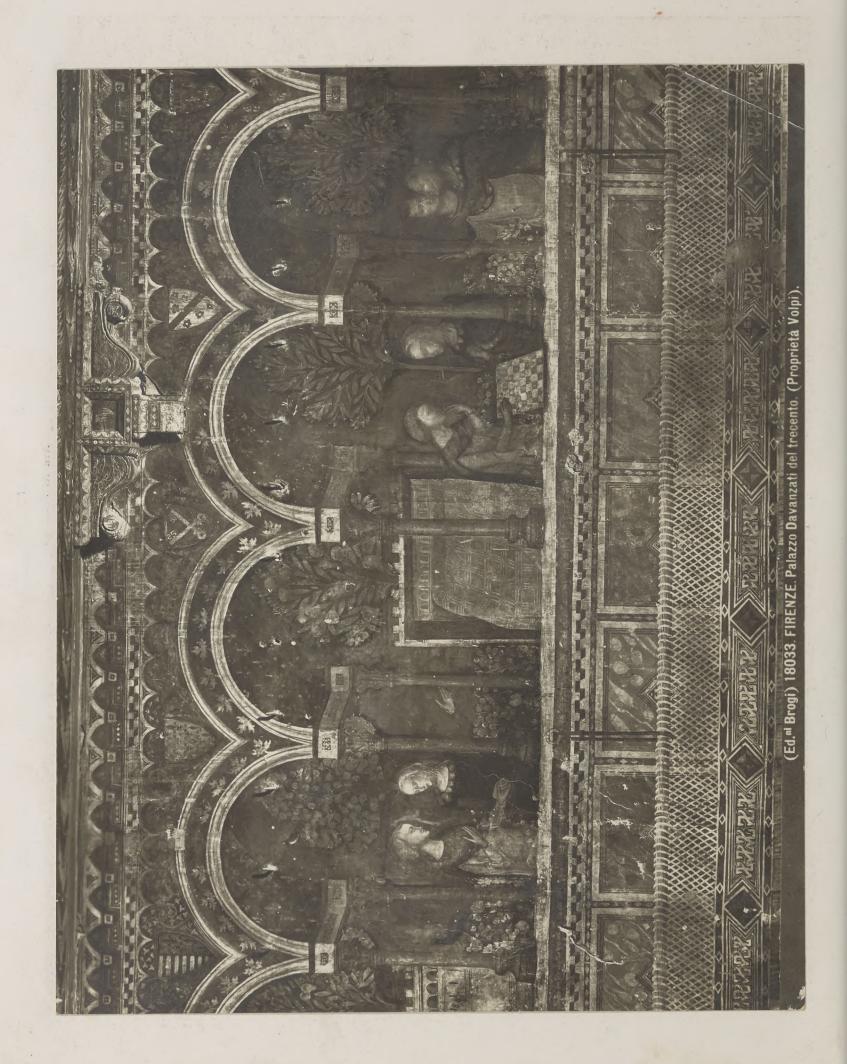


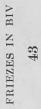


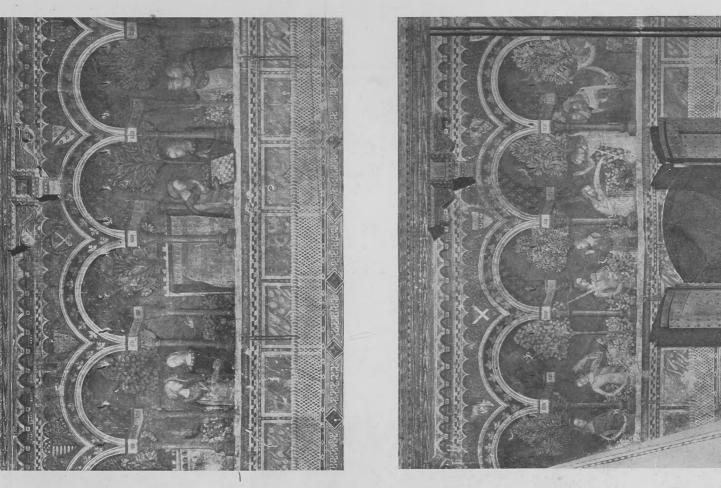


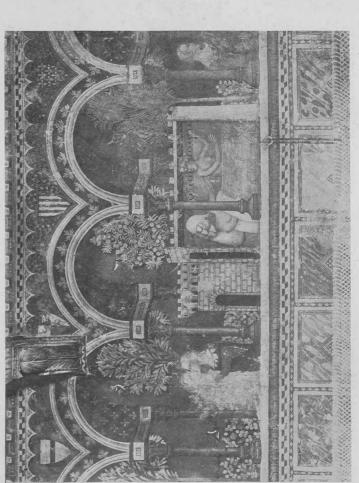


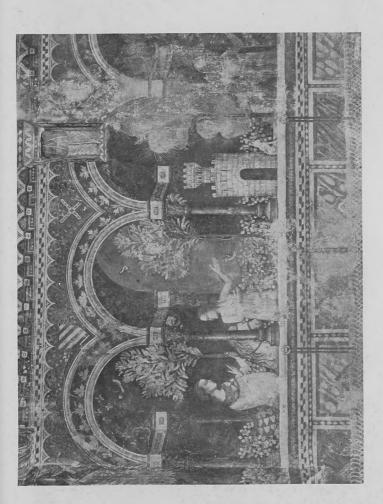


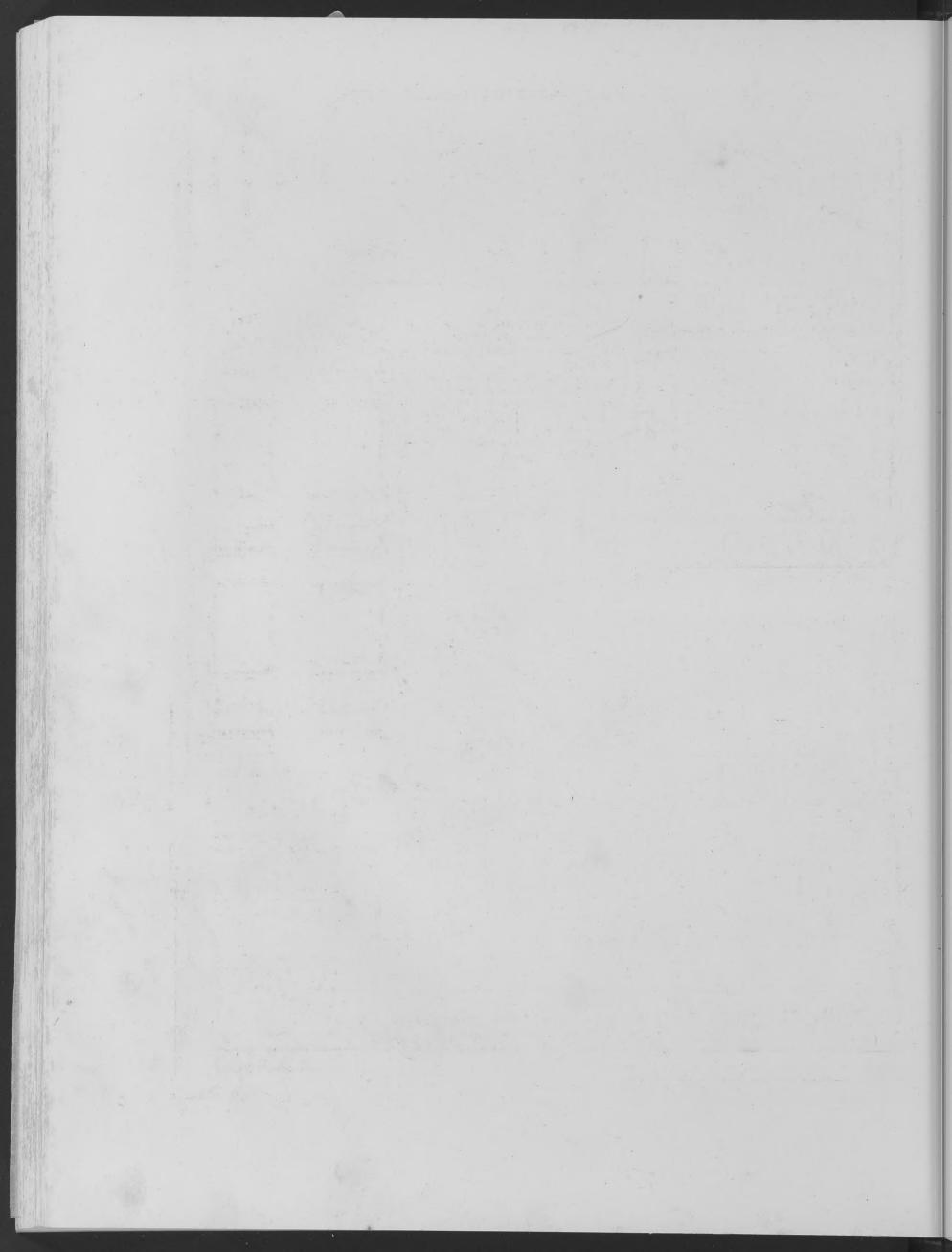


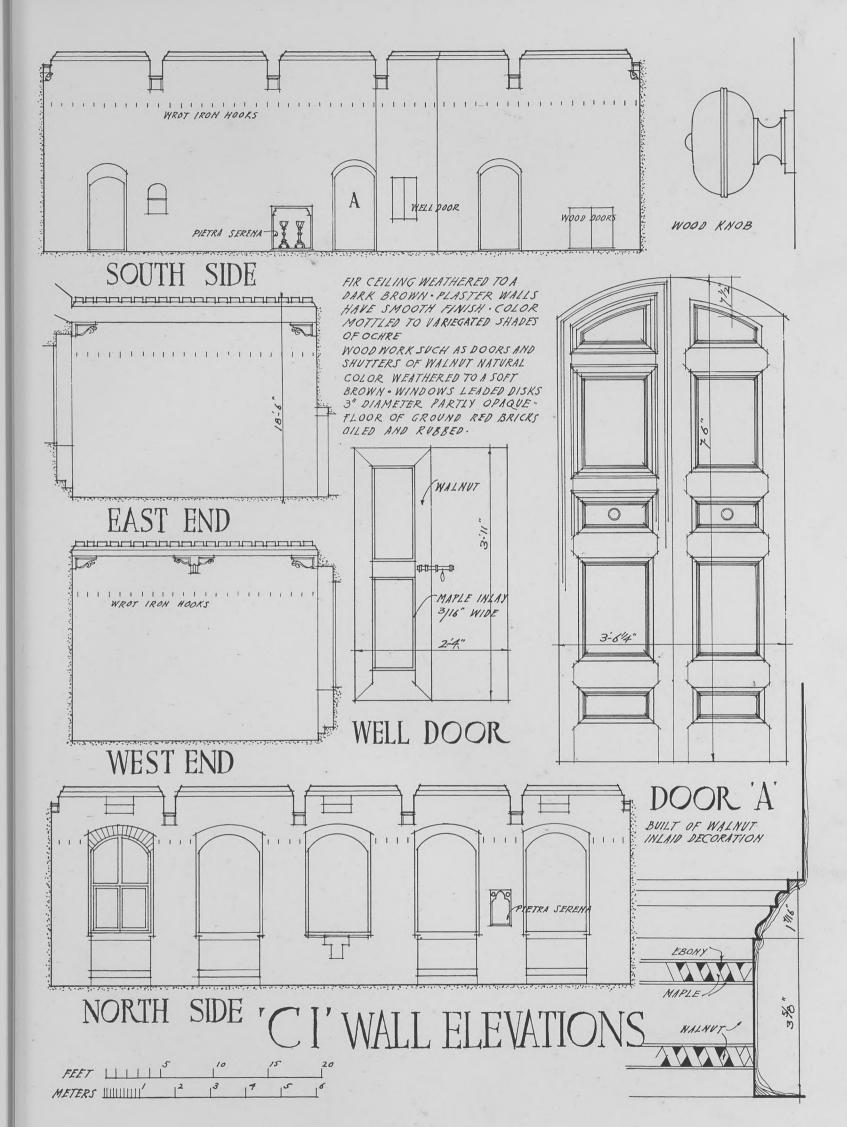


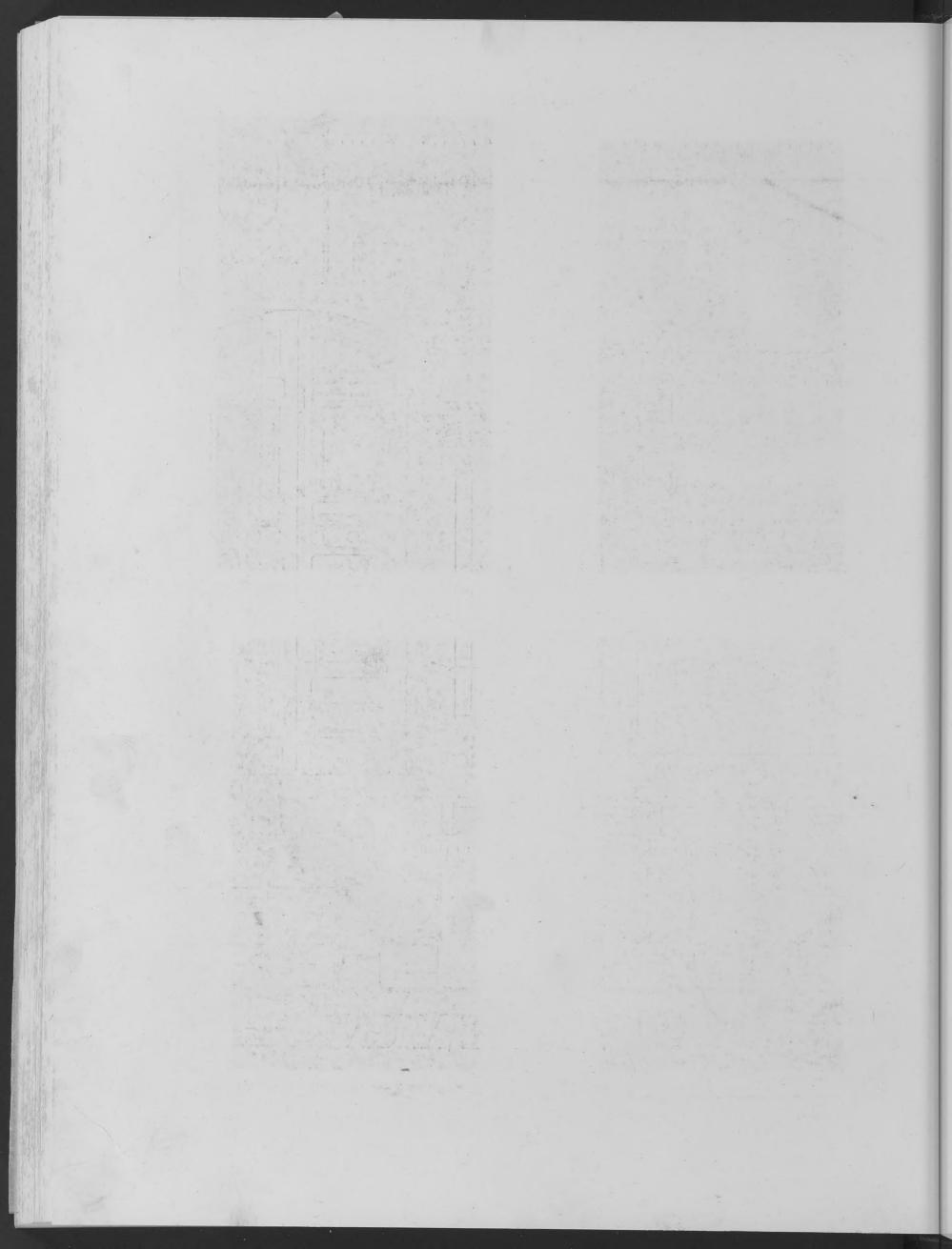


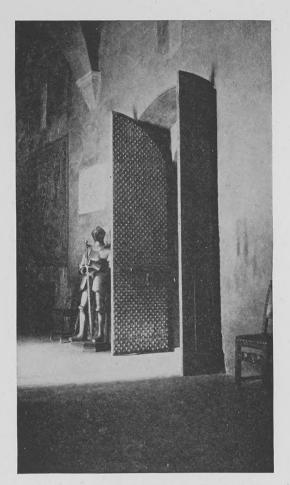








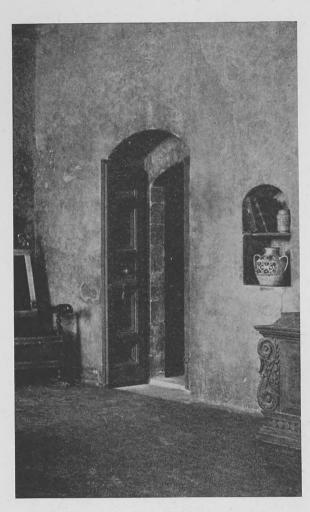




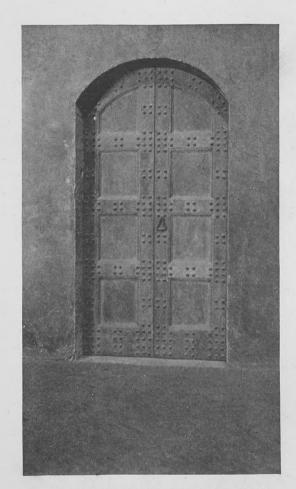
VESTIBULE—LARGE DOOR TO COURT



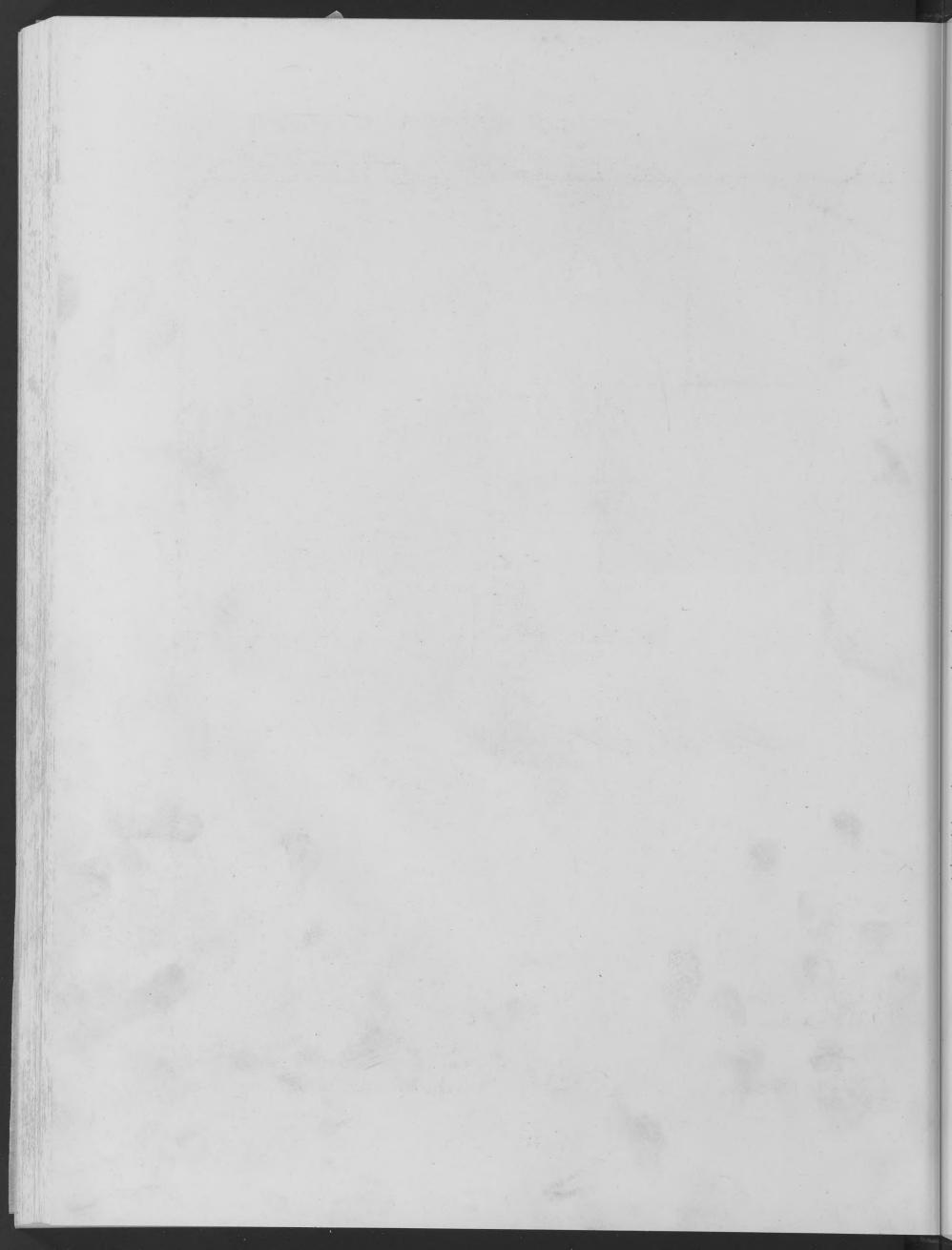
CII DOOR INTO CI

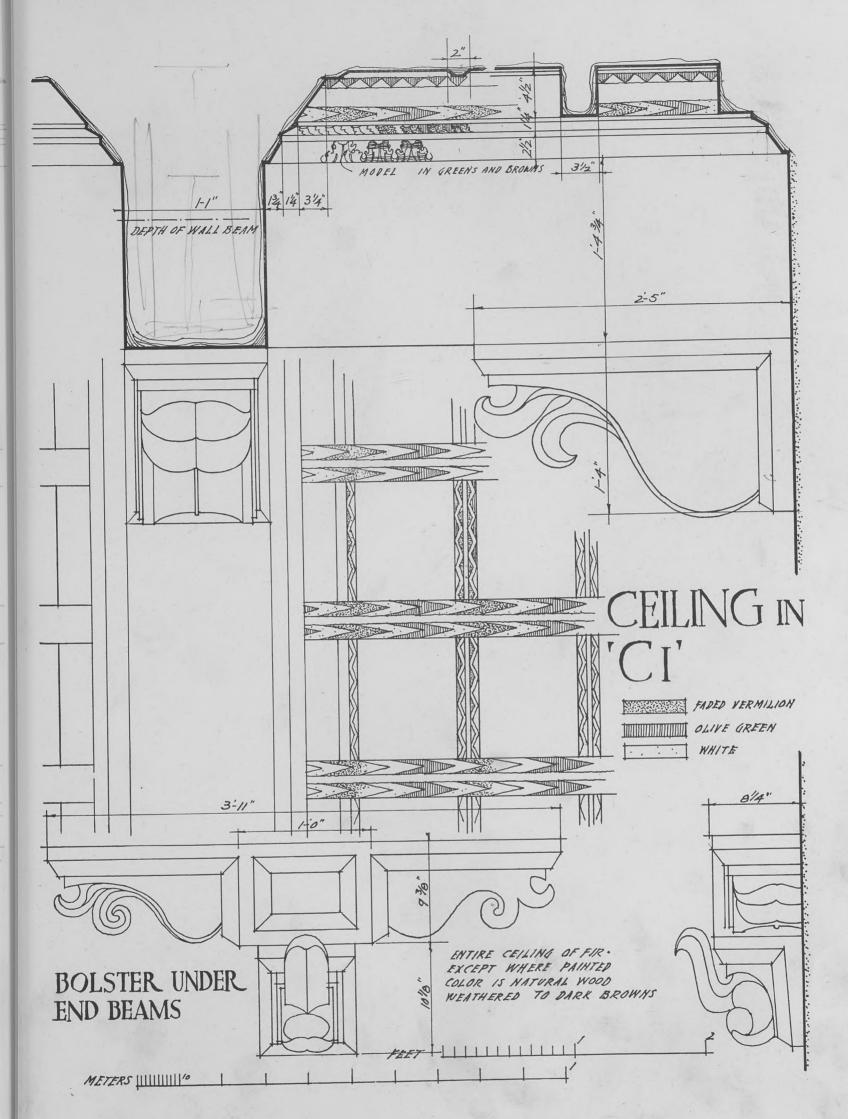


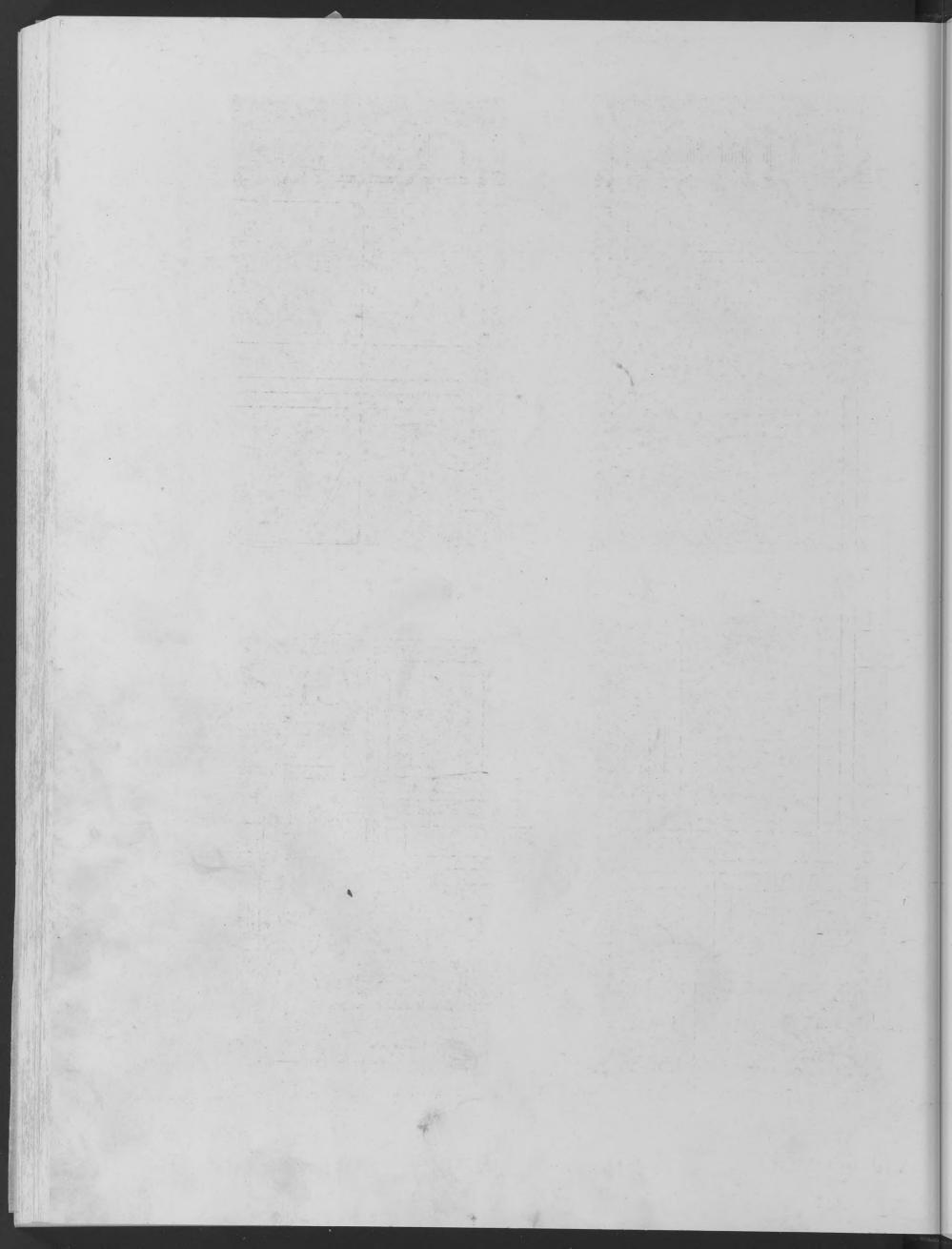
DETAIL OF SMALL DOOR IN CI INTO CV

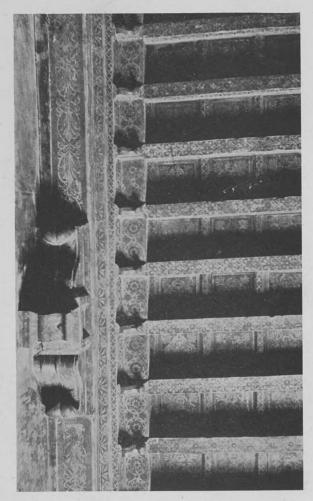


VESTIBULE—SMALL DOOR TO COURT









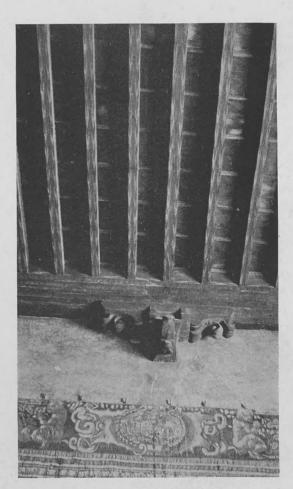
CEILING DETAIL IN BI



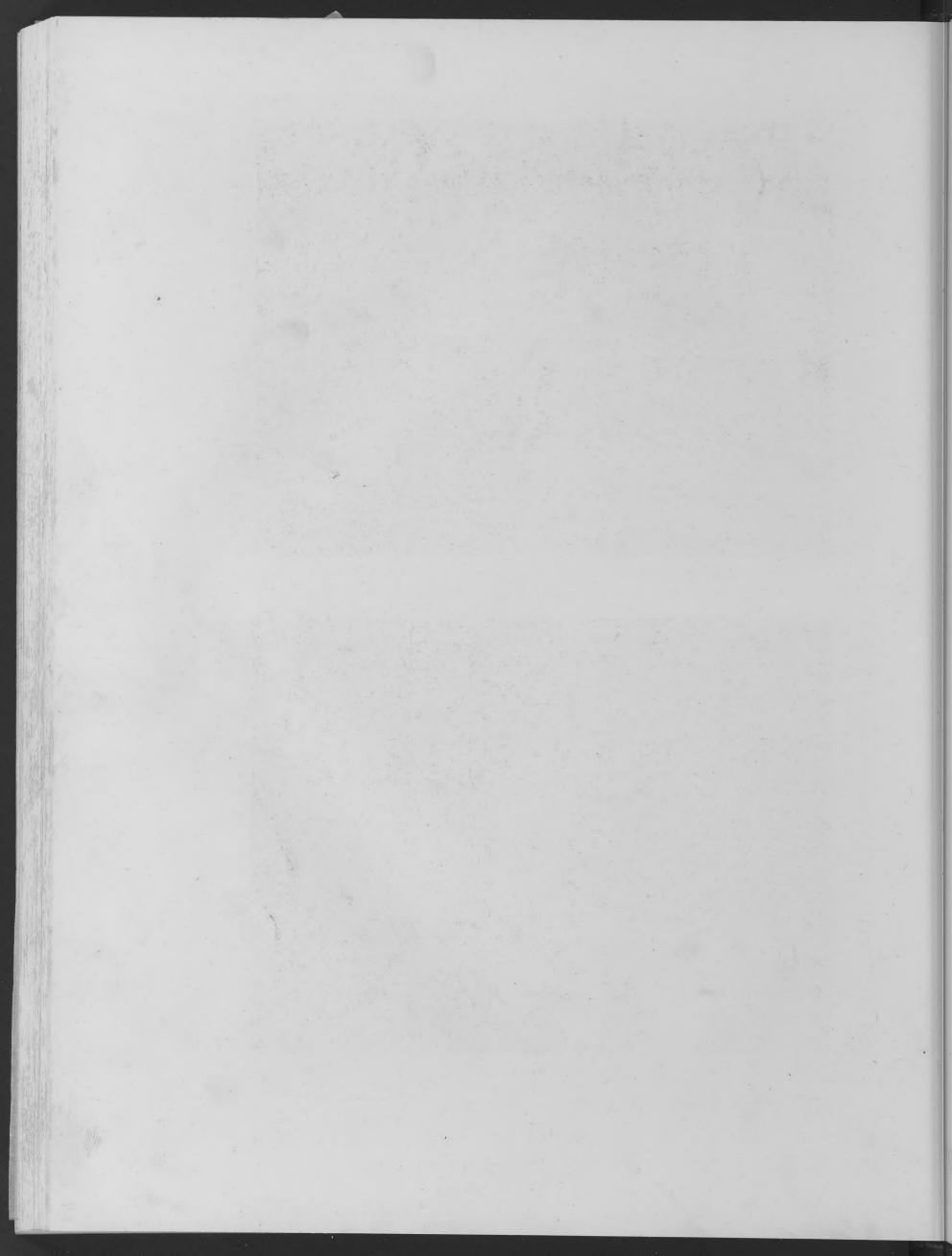
CEILING IN CI



FIREPLACE IN BII



CEILING DETAIL IN CI

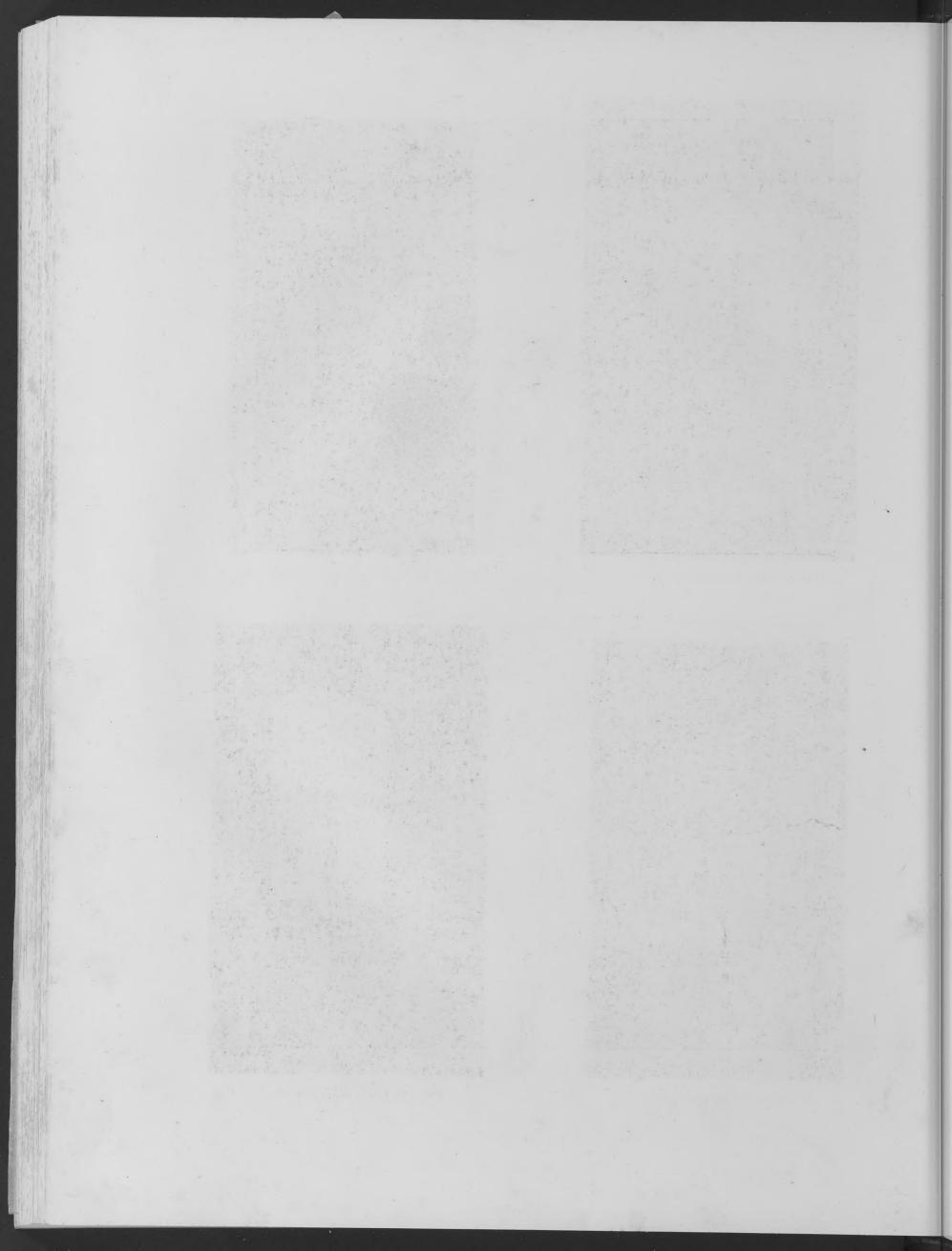


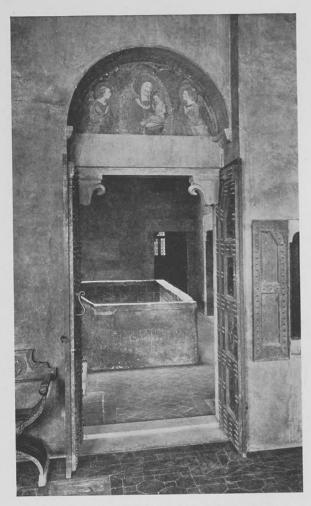


VIEW TOWARDS EAST END OF CI

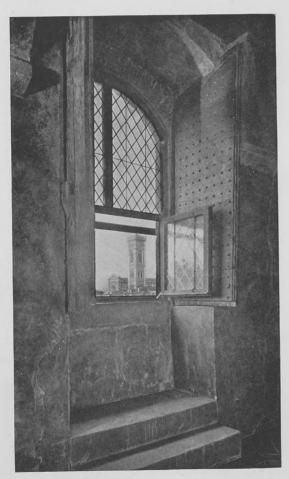


VIEW IN CIV





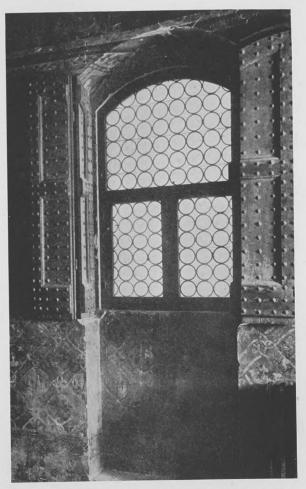
DOORWAY DETAIL IN BI INTO COURT



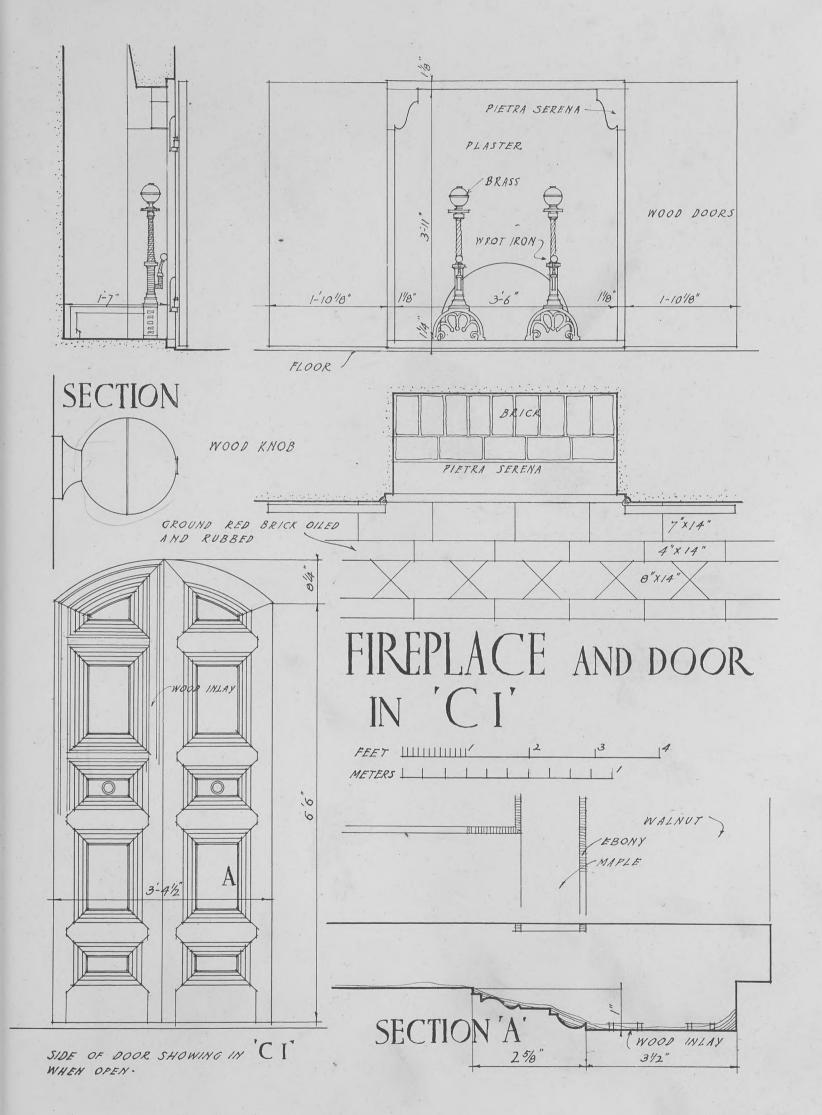
DETAIL OF WINDOW IN DI



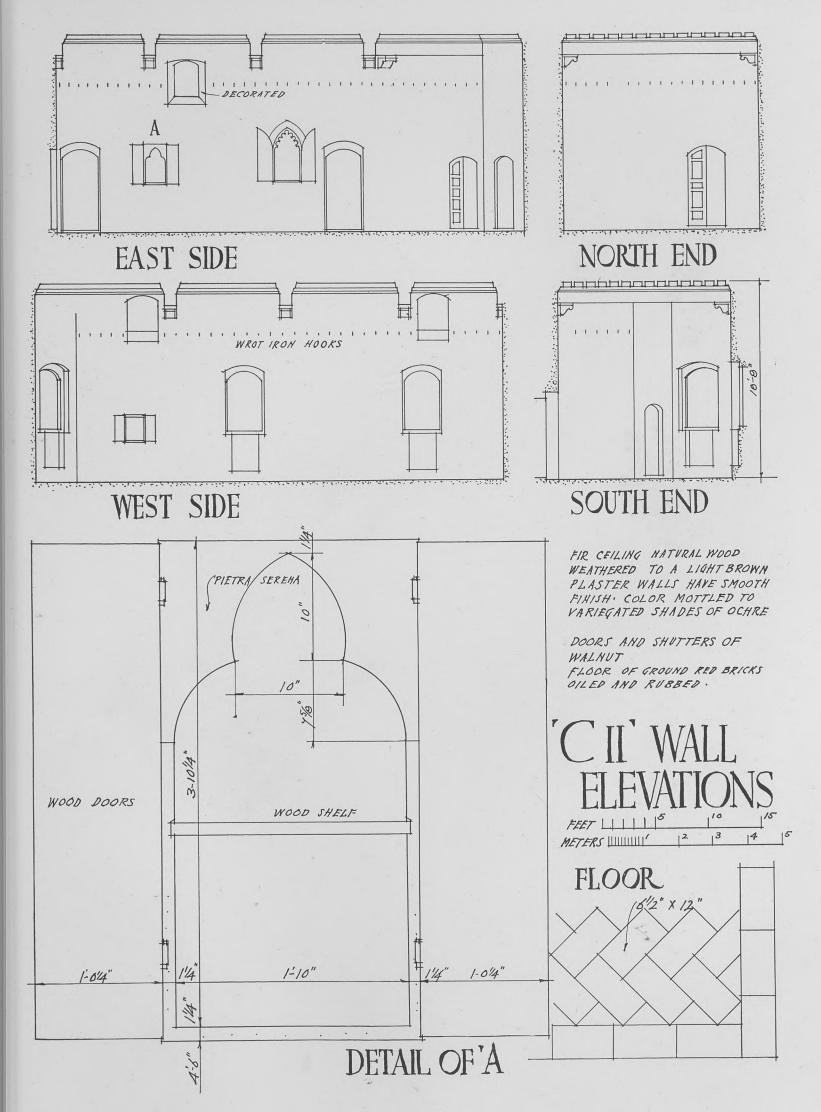
DETAIL OF DOOR BETWEEN BI AND COURT

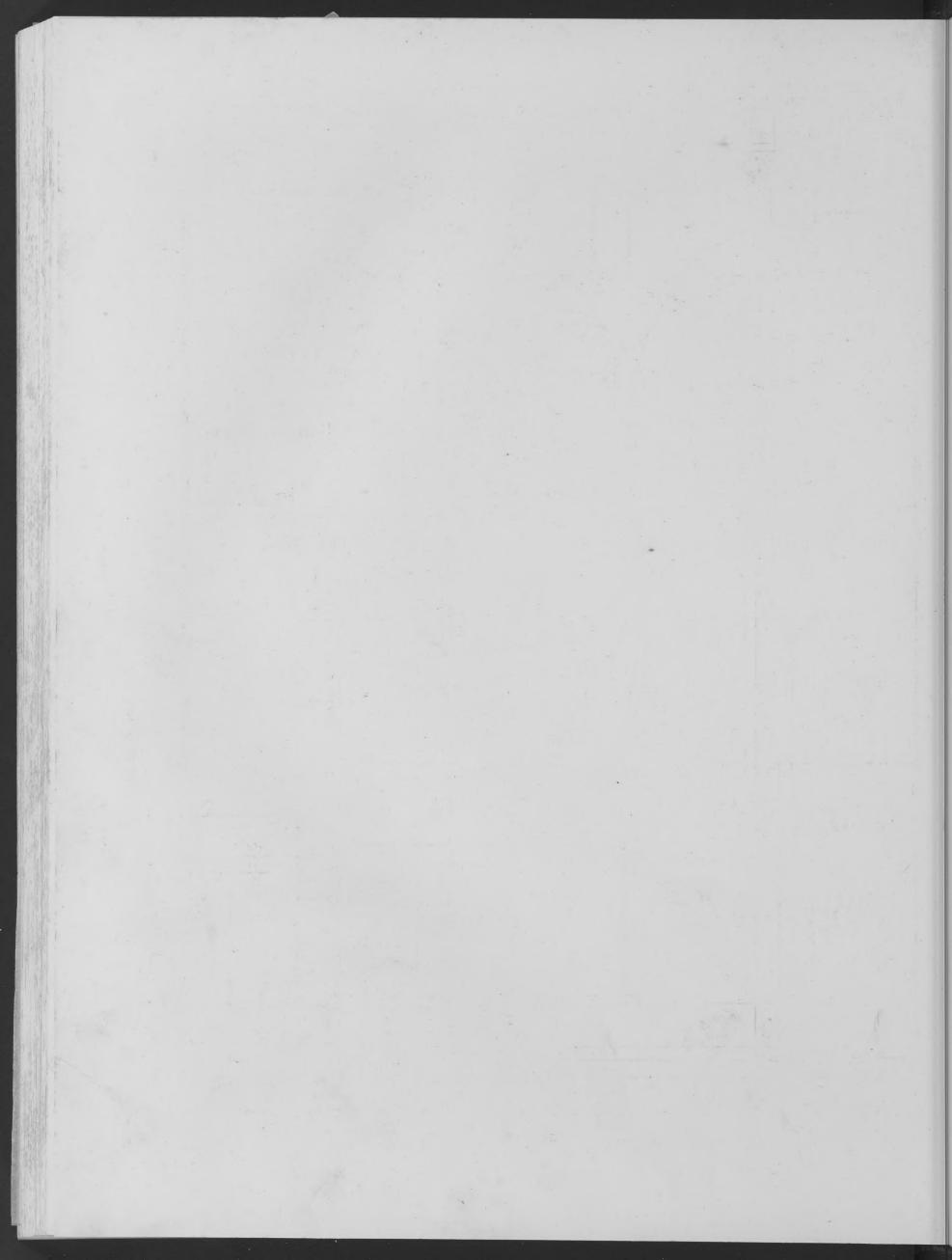


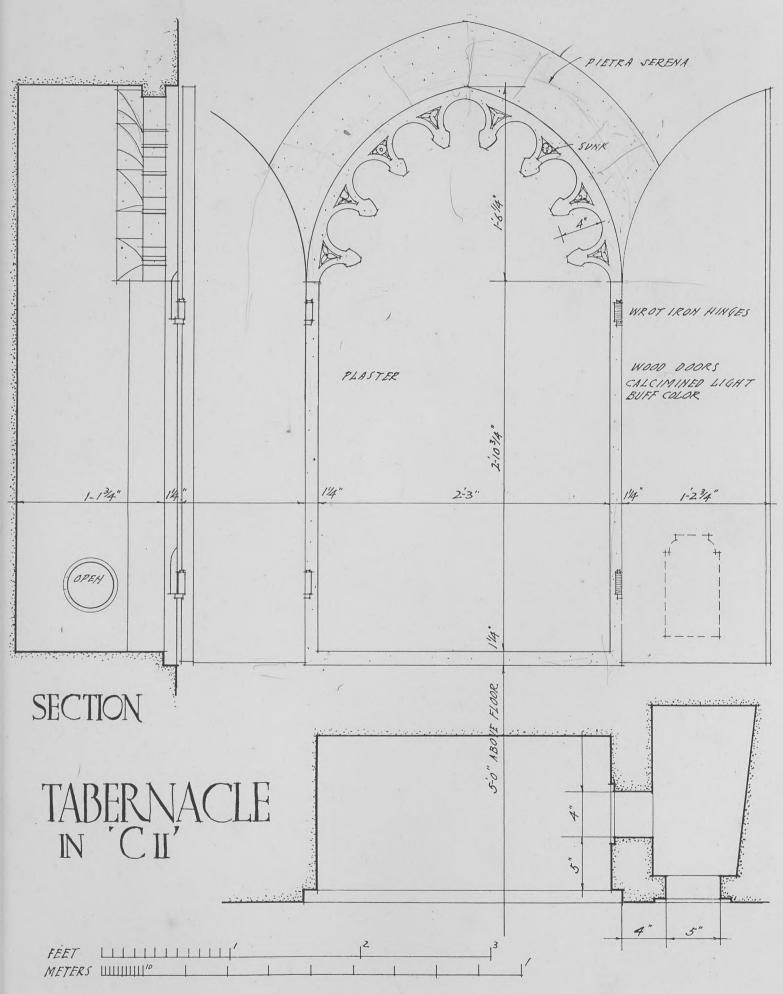
WINDOW AND SHUTTER DETAIL IN CIV

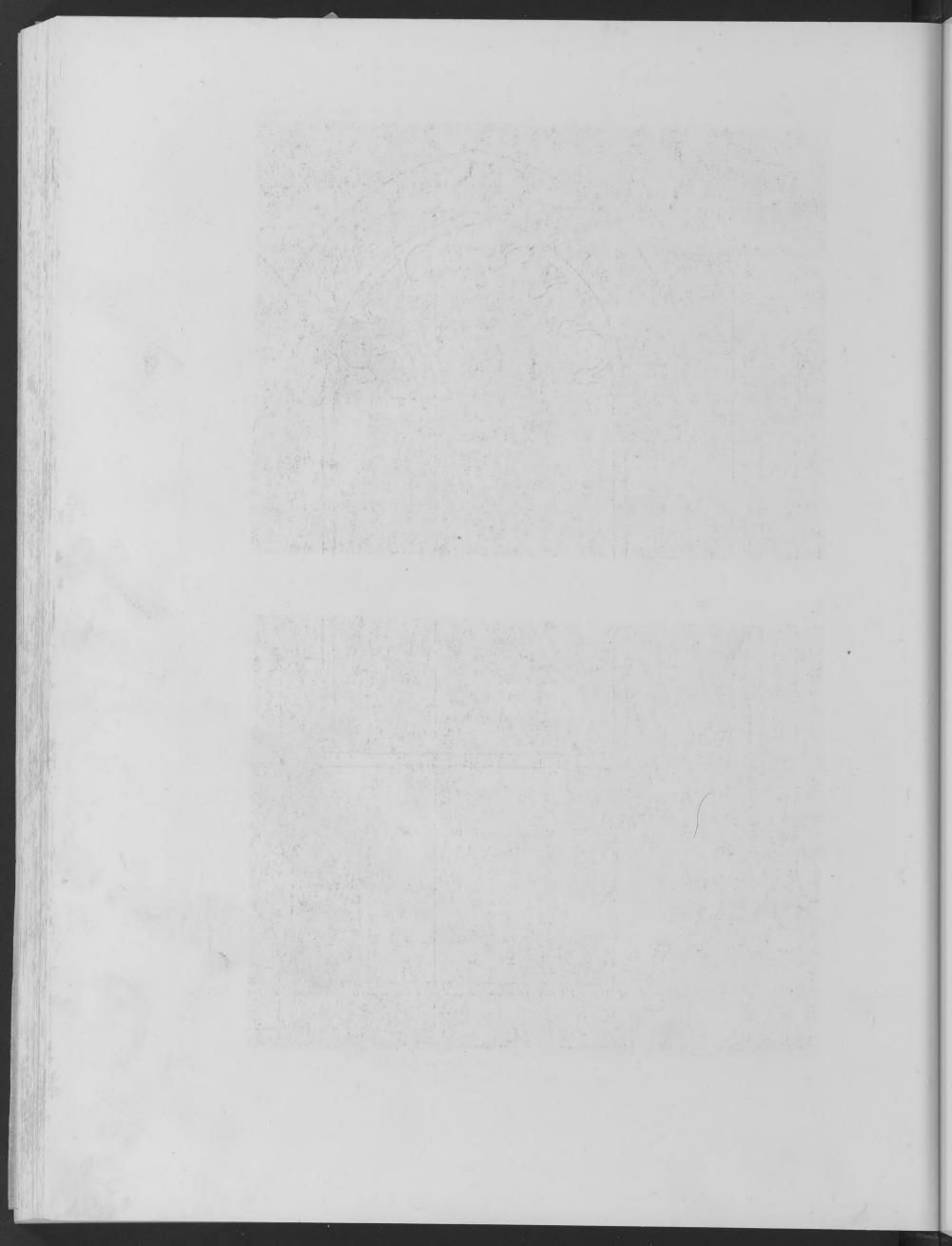




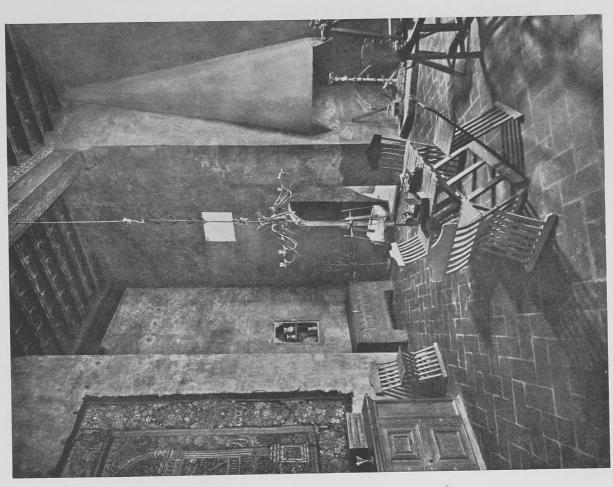




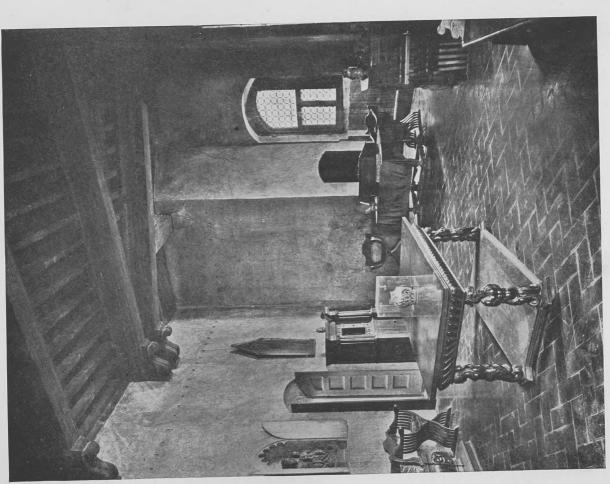




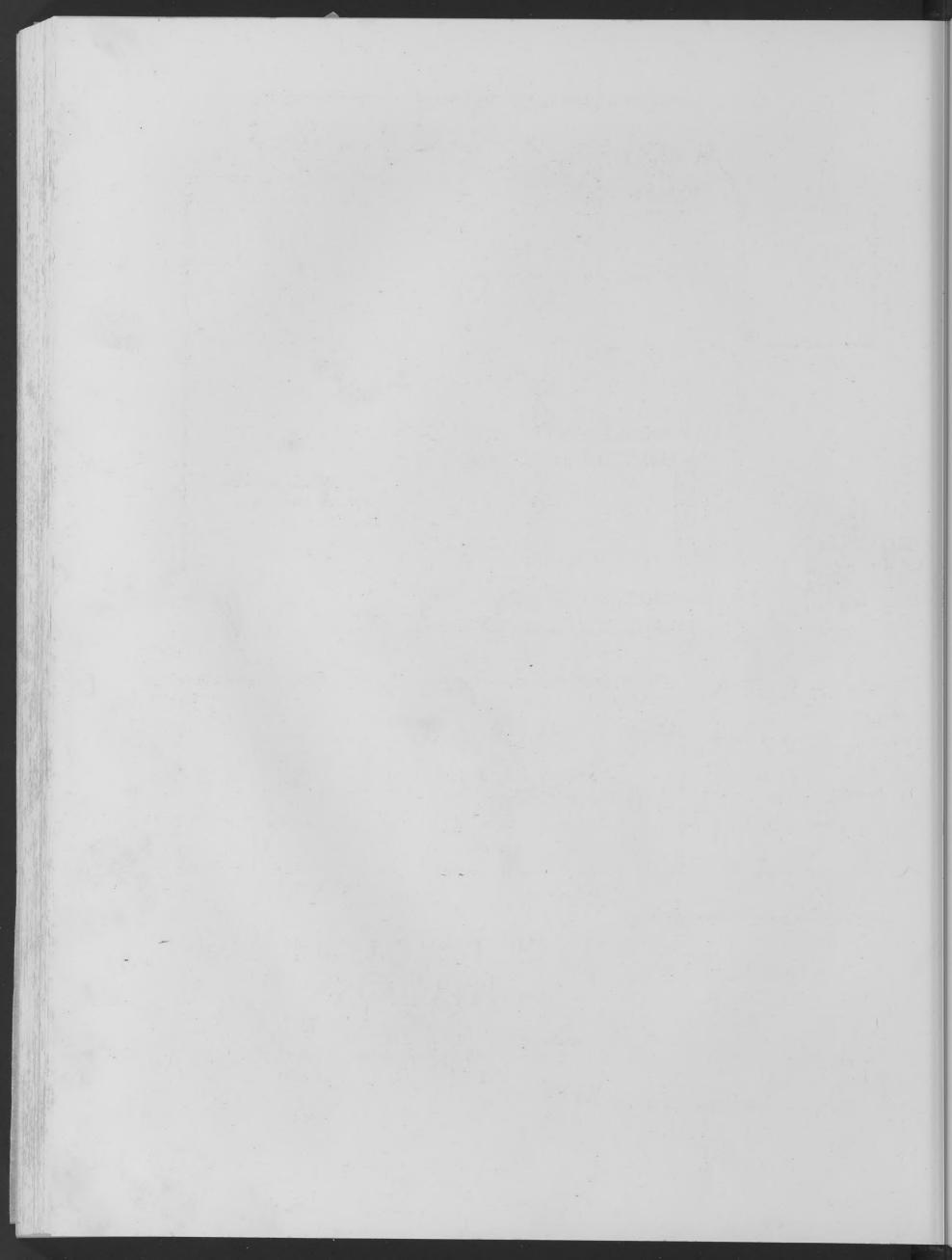


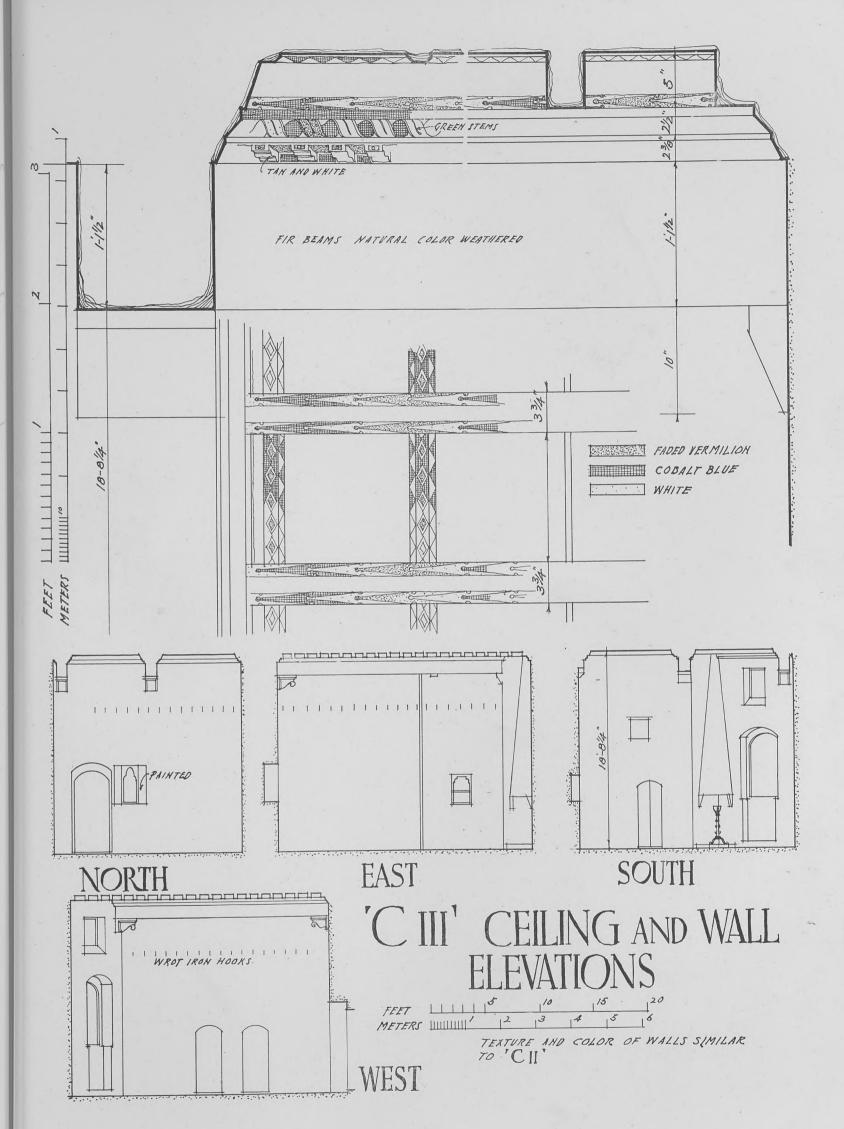


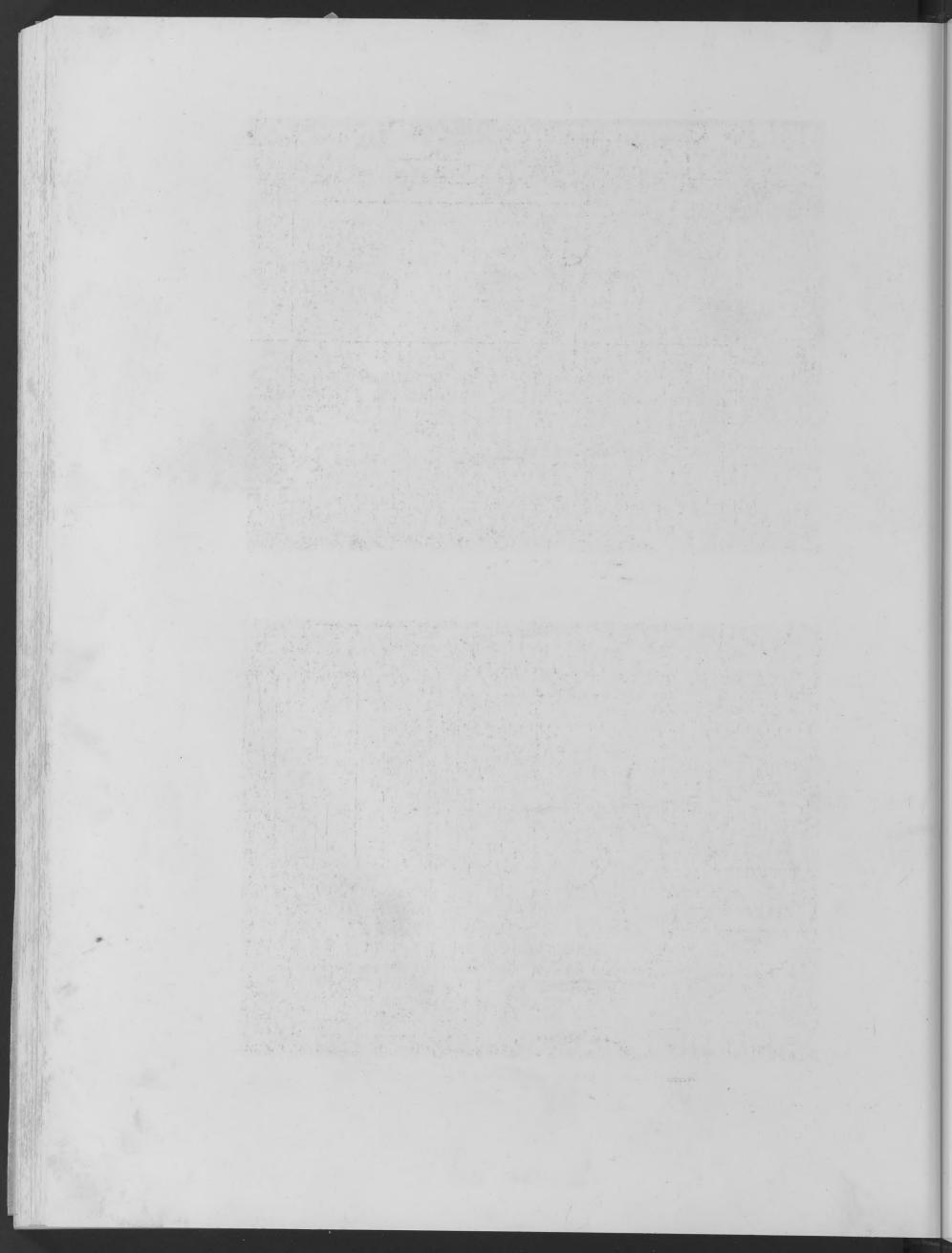
VIEW IN CIII

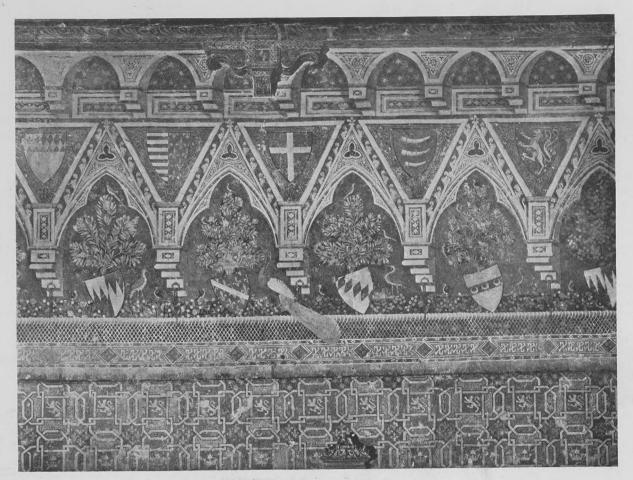


VIEW IN CII

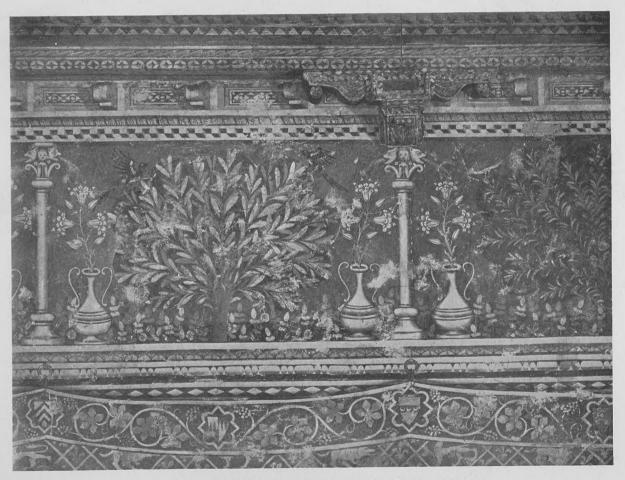




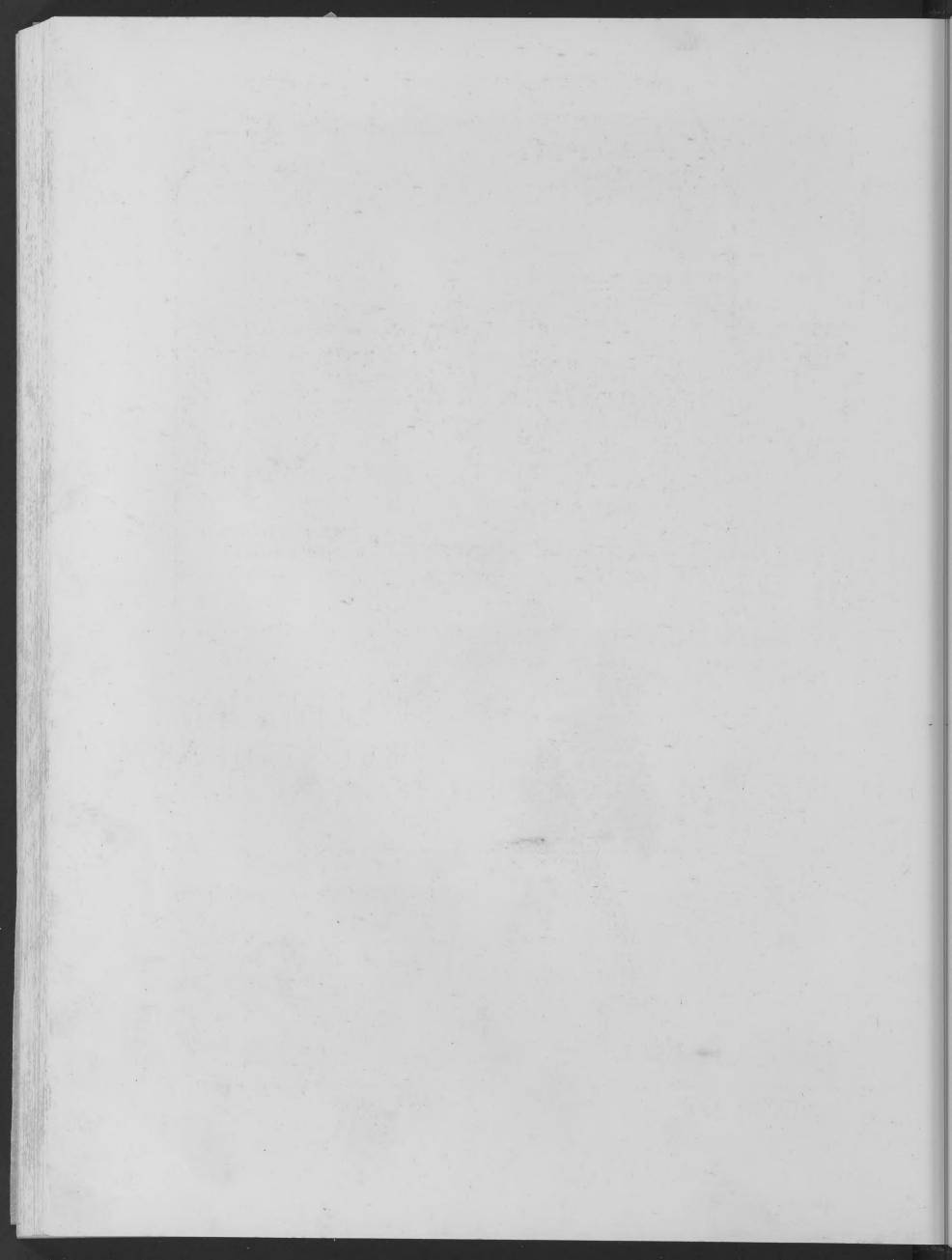


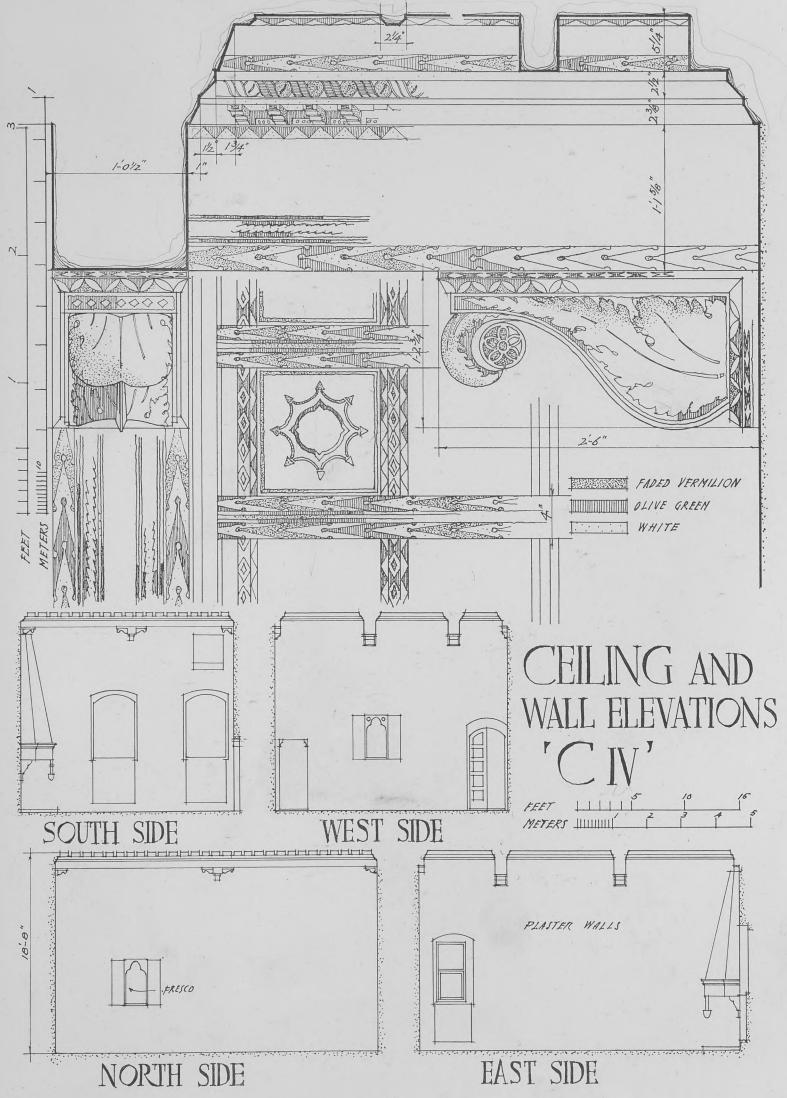


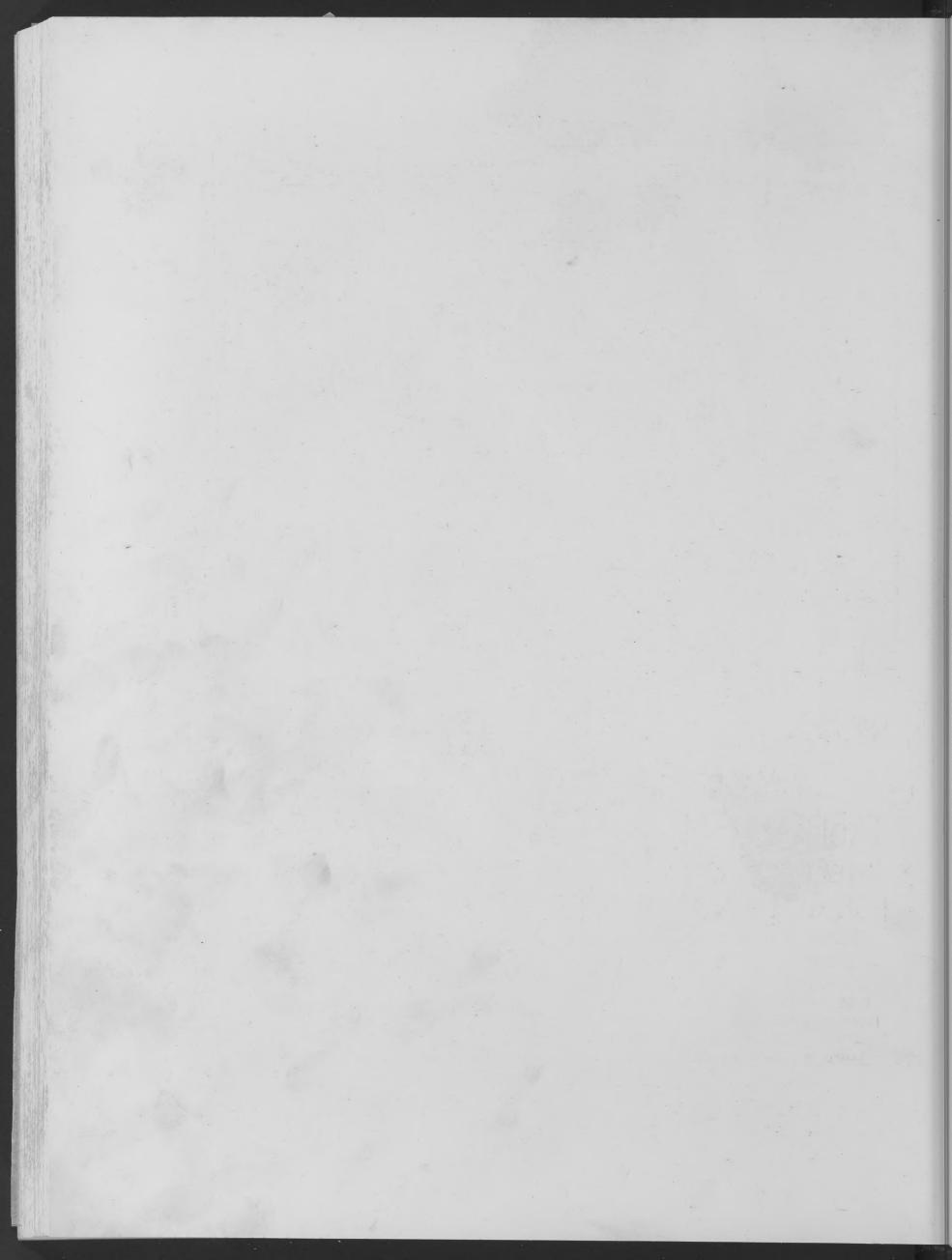
DETAIL OF FRIEZE IN BIV

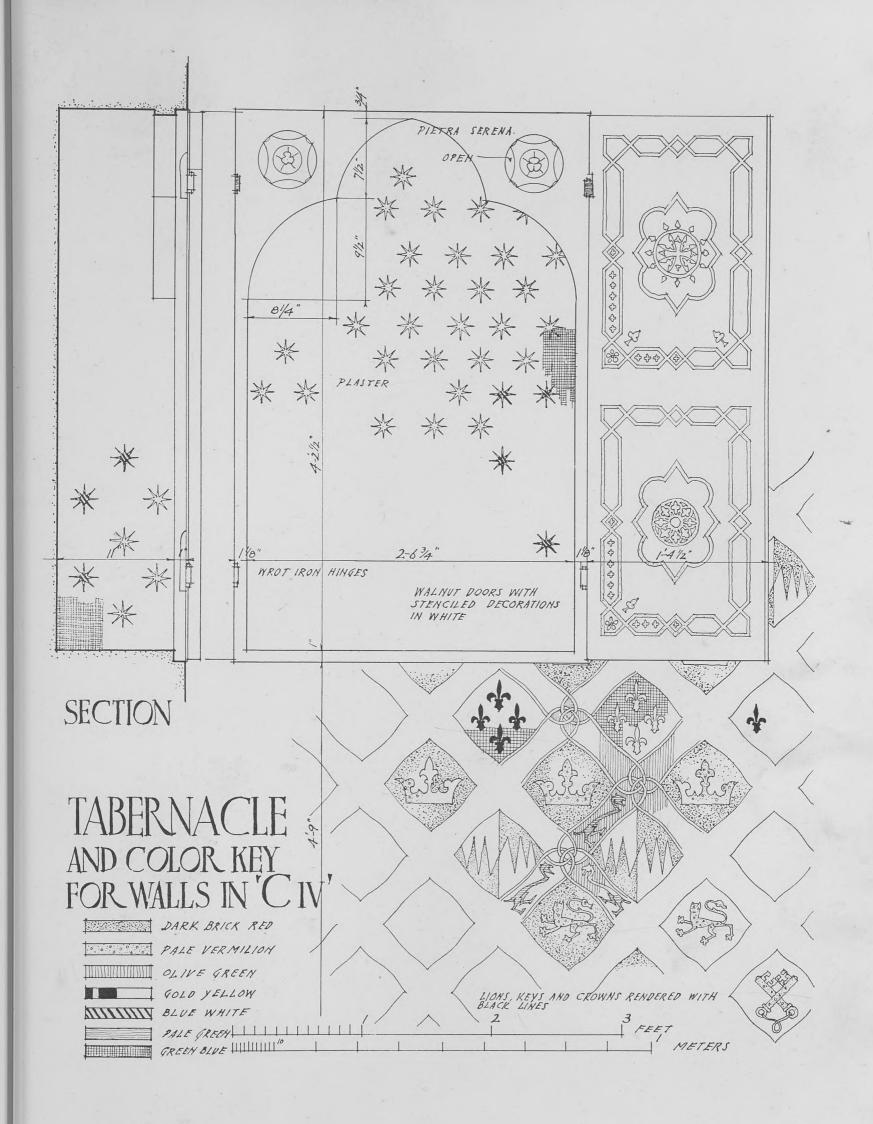


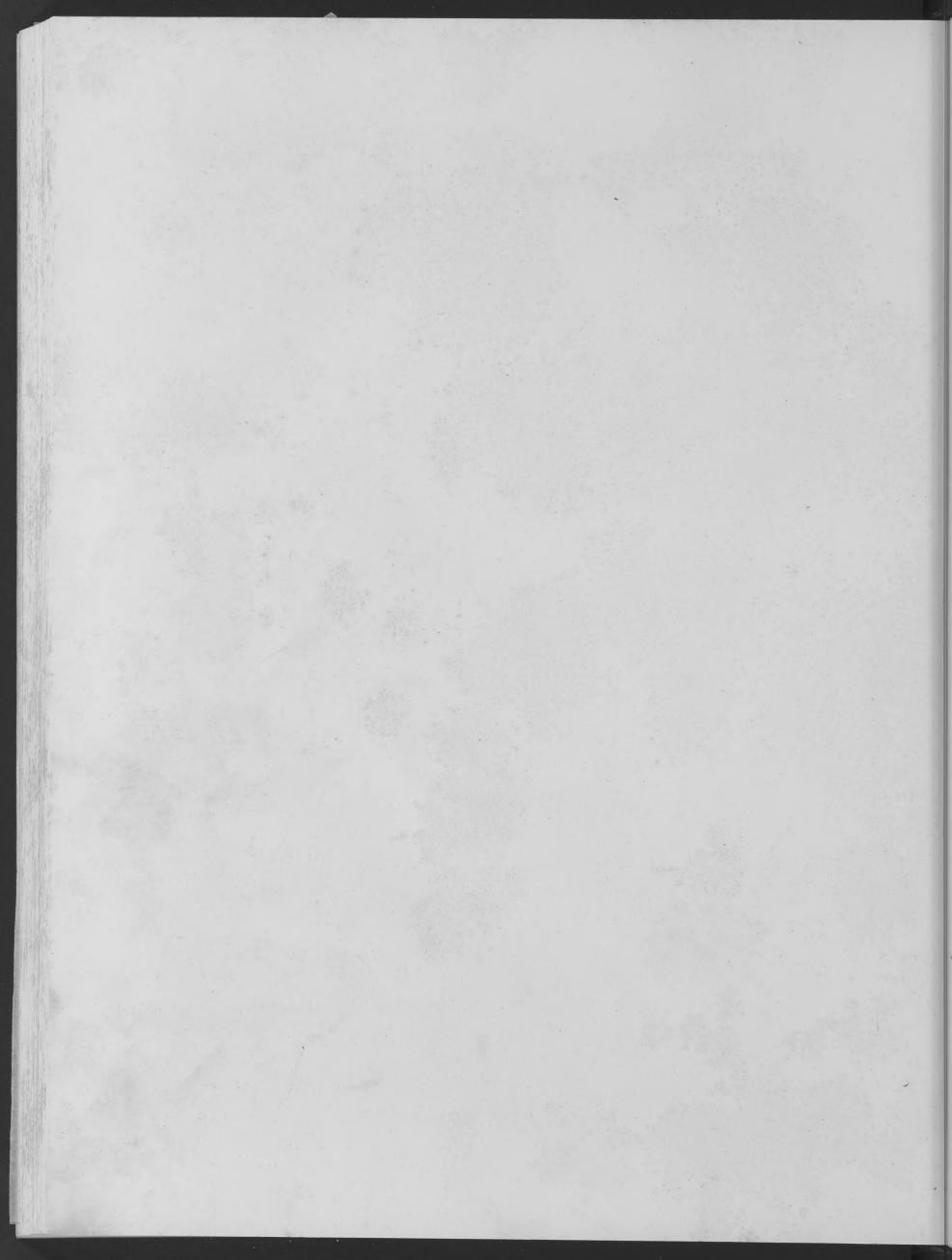
DETAILS OF FRIEZE IN CIV, SHOWING WOOD BOLSTER

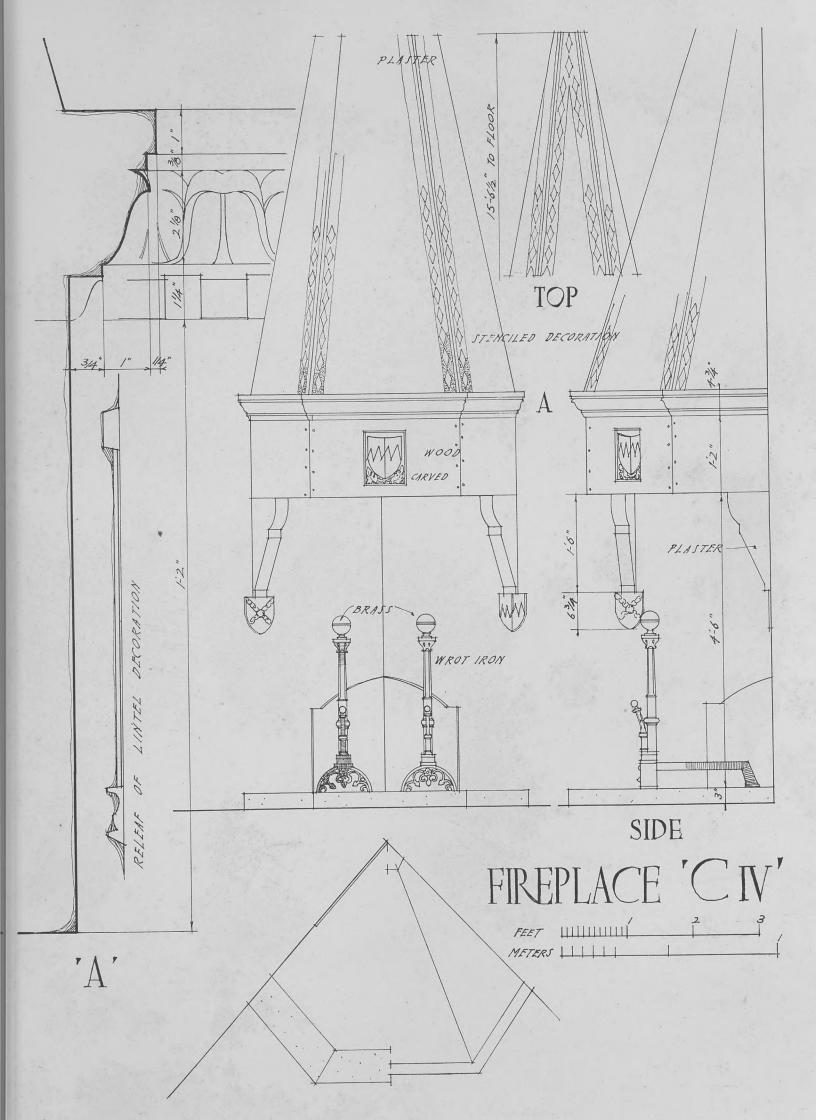




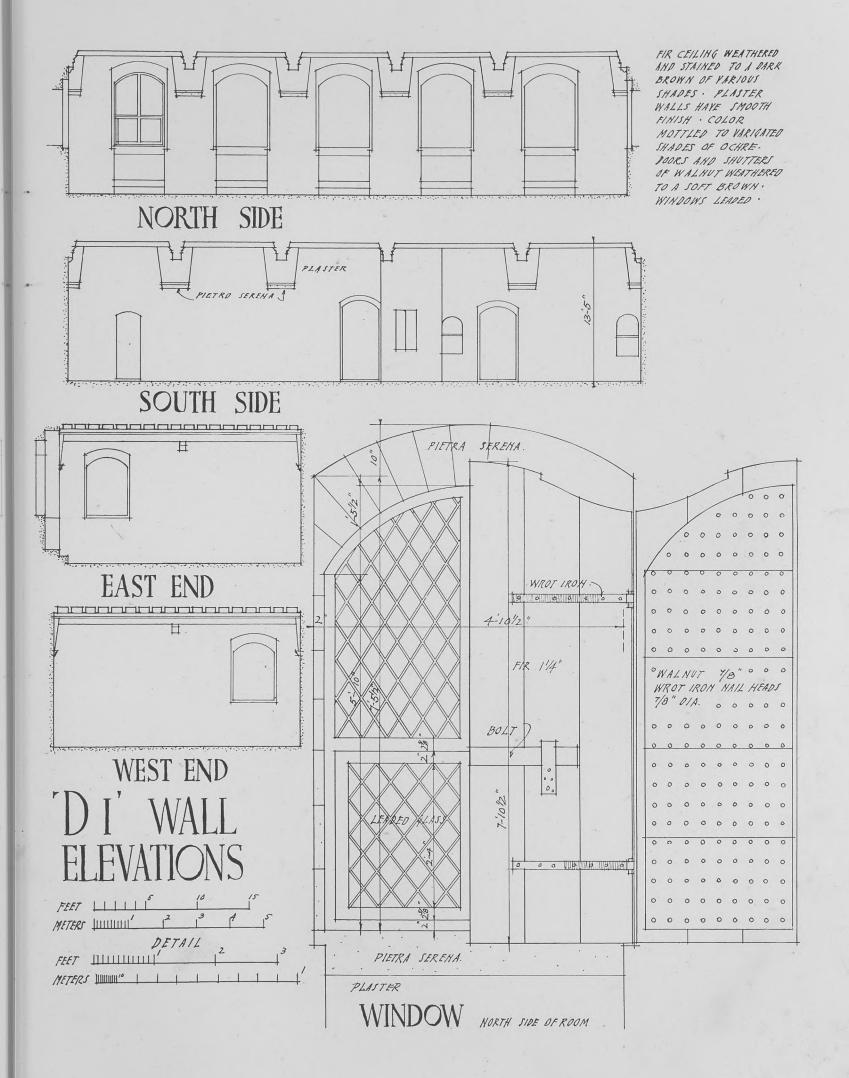


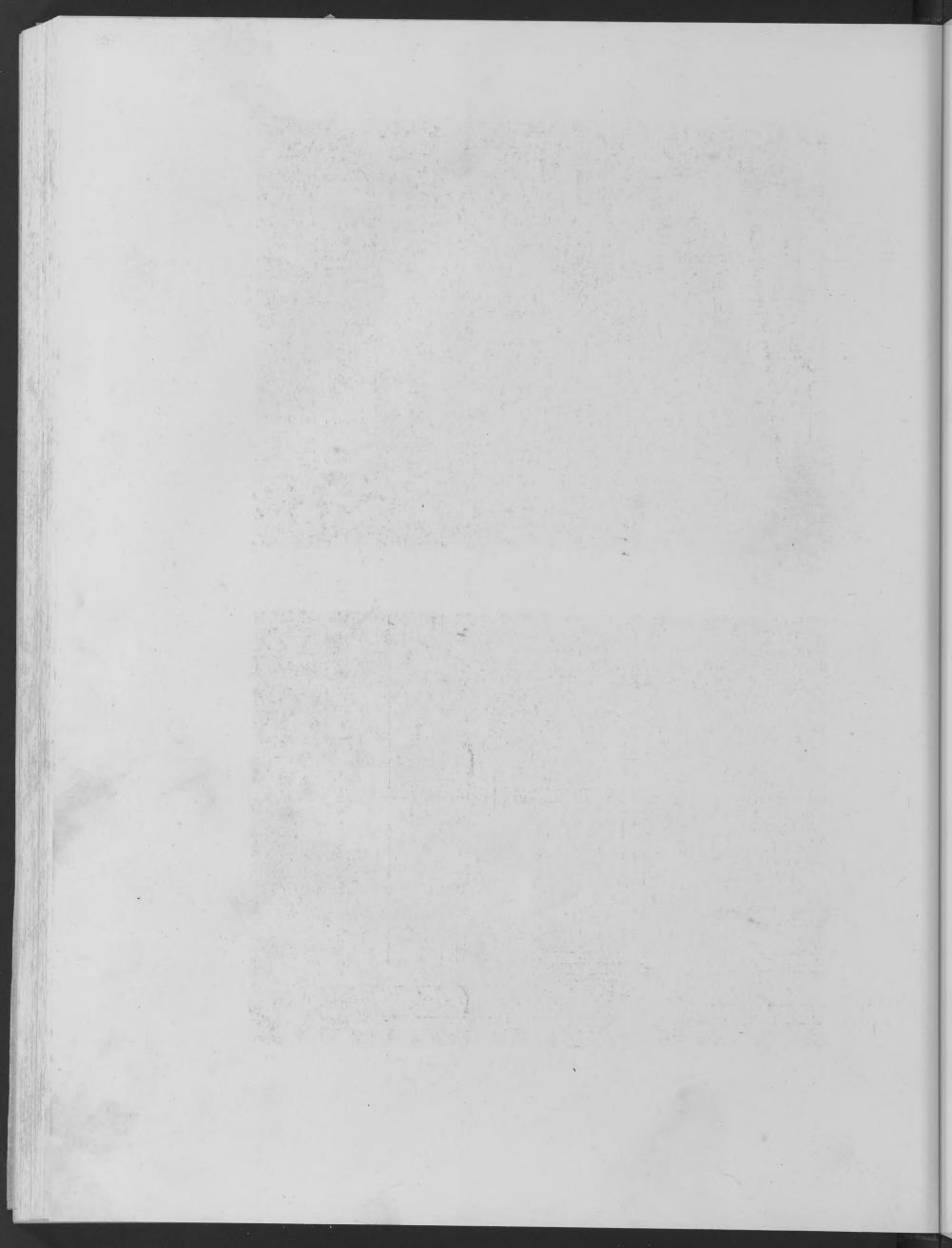










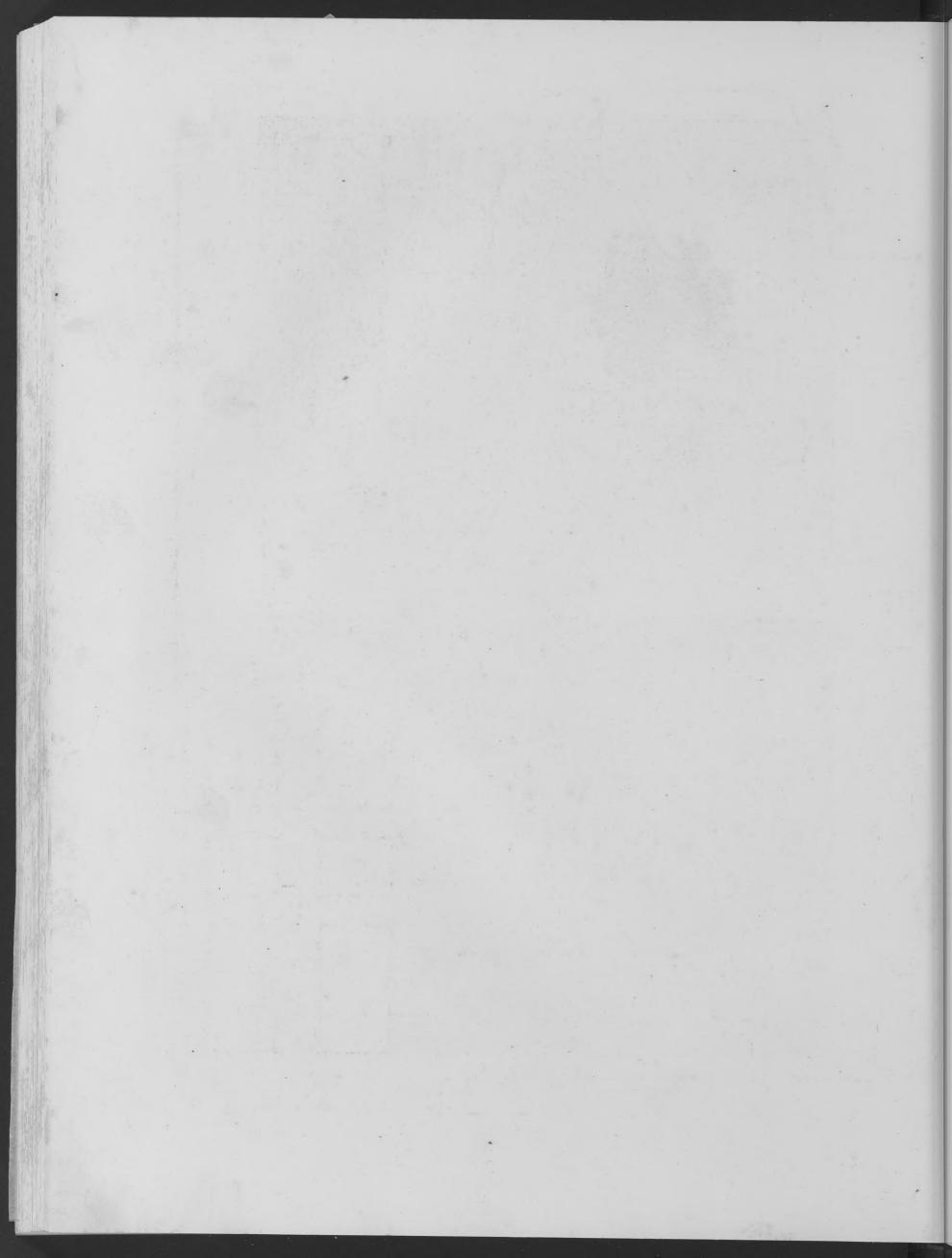


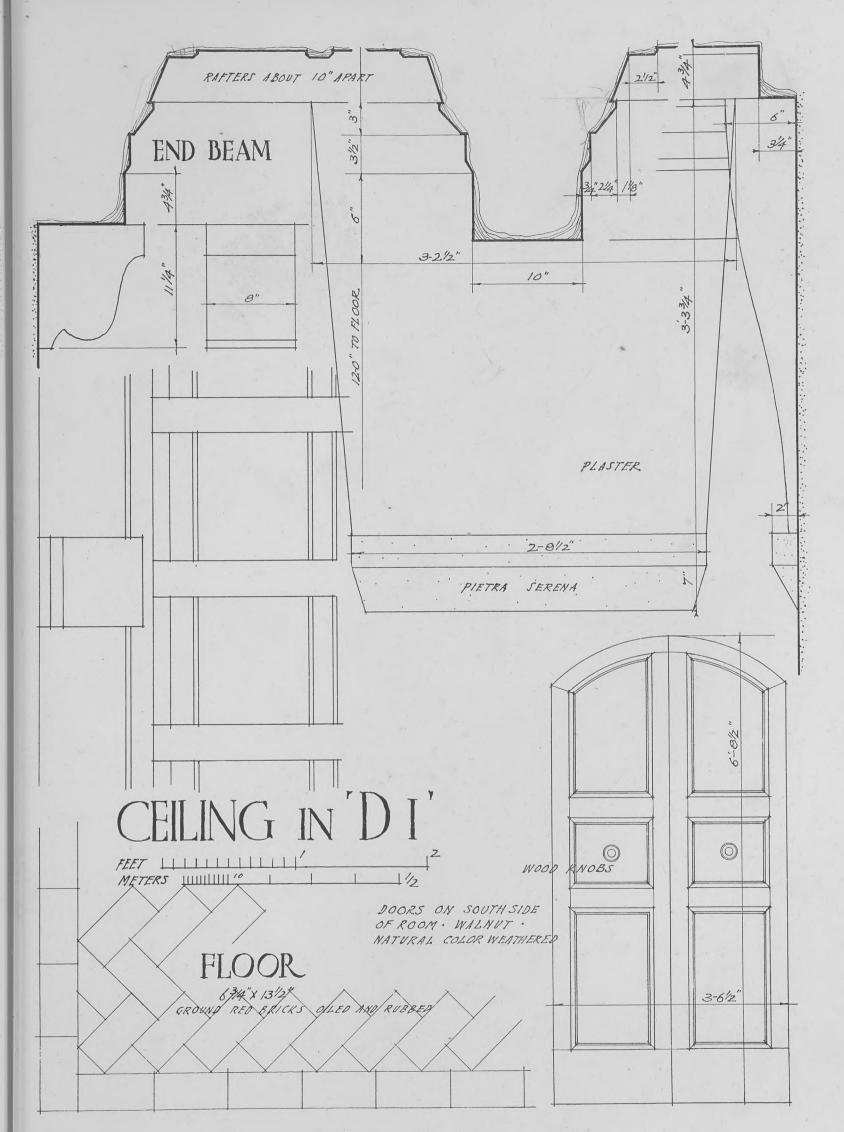


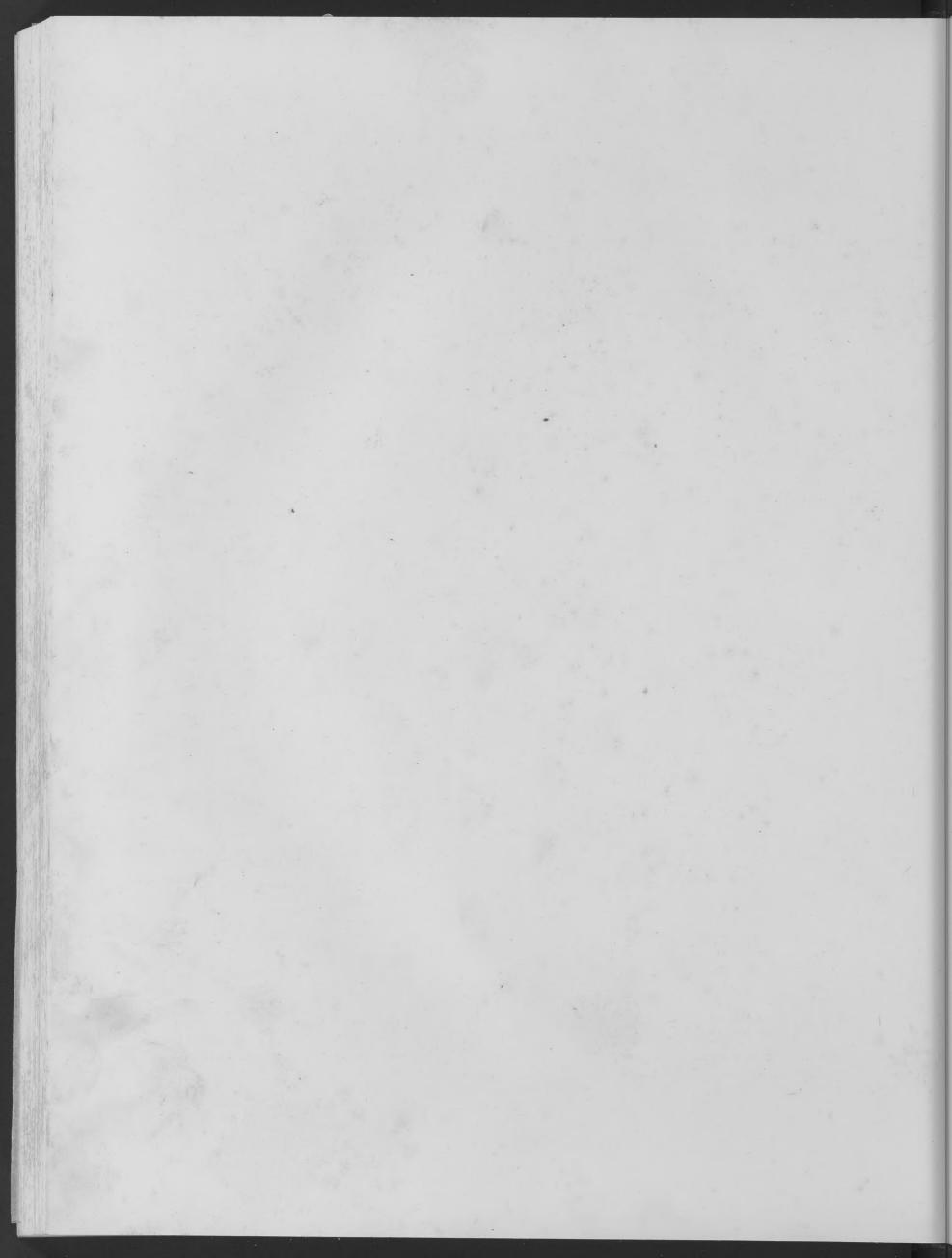
VIEW IN DI

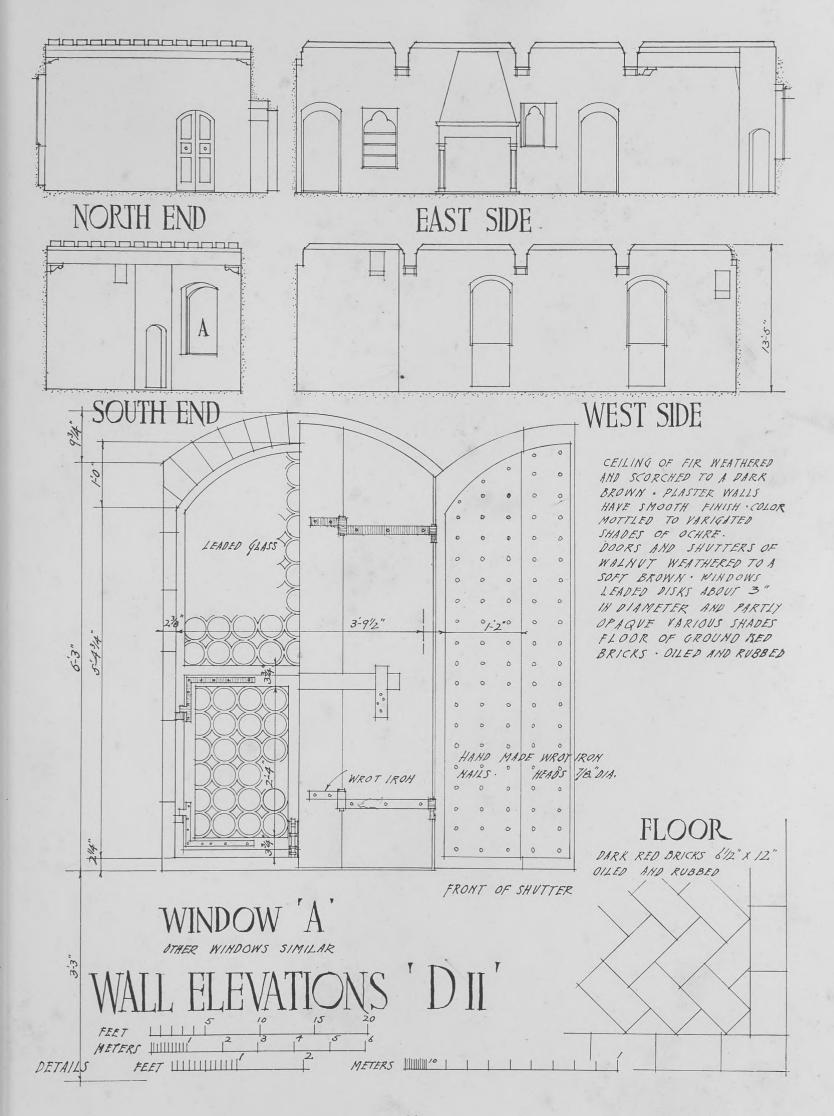


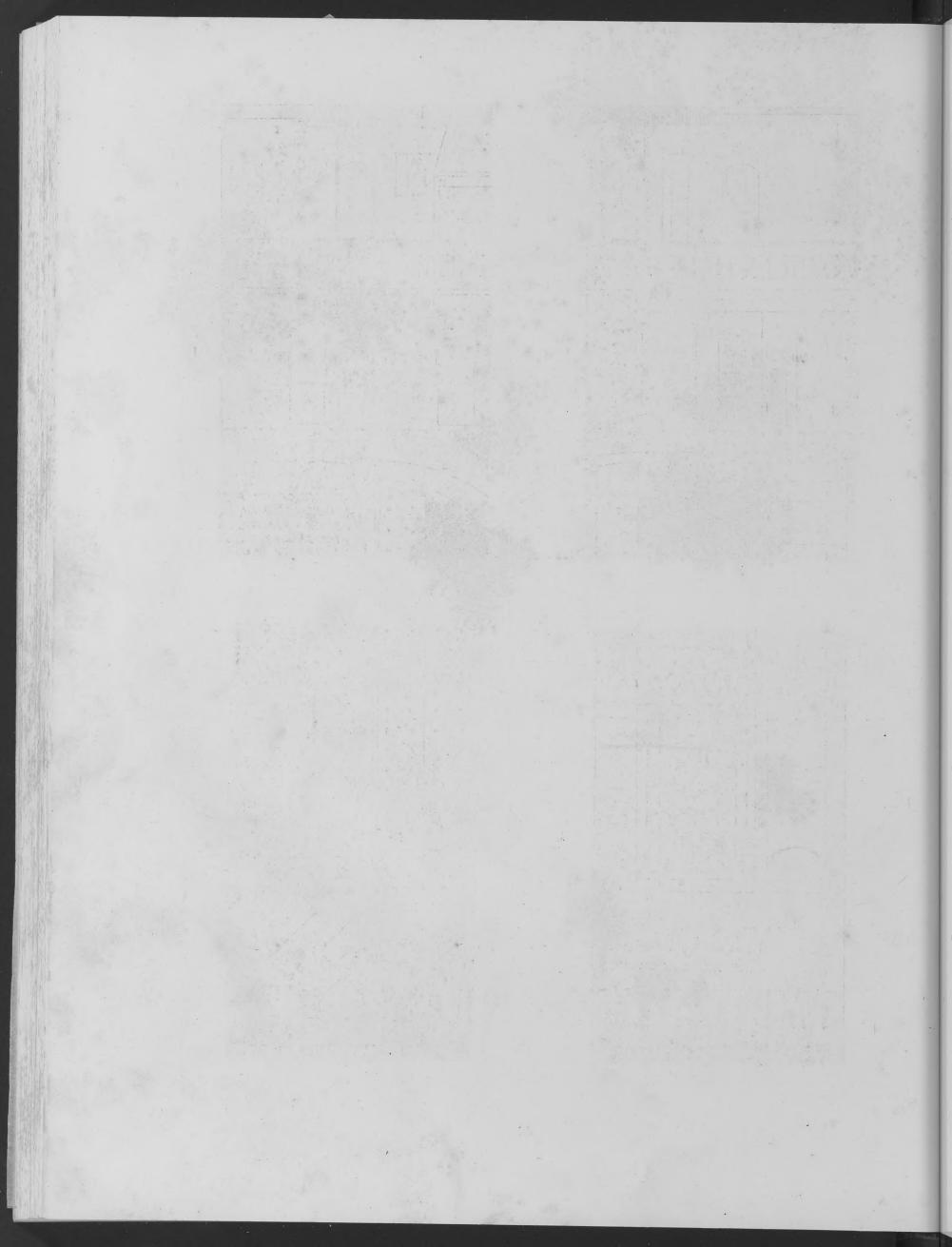
VIEW IN DII

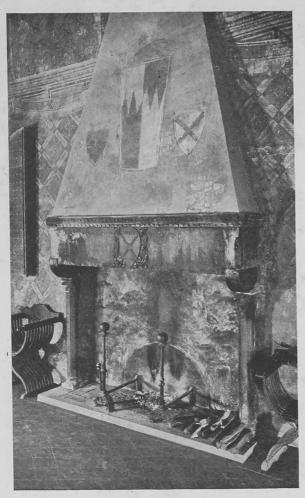




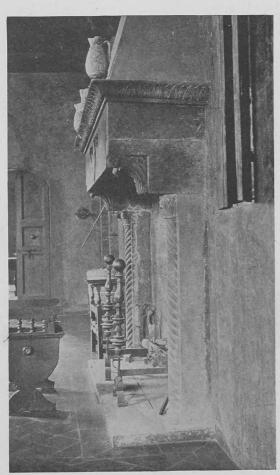








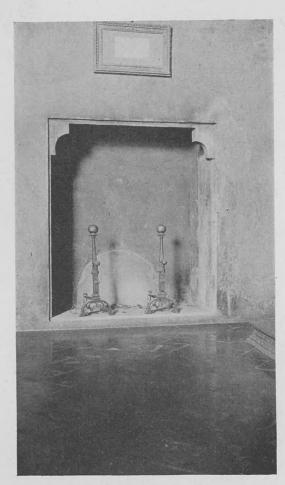
FIREPLACE IN BII



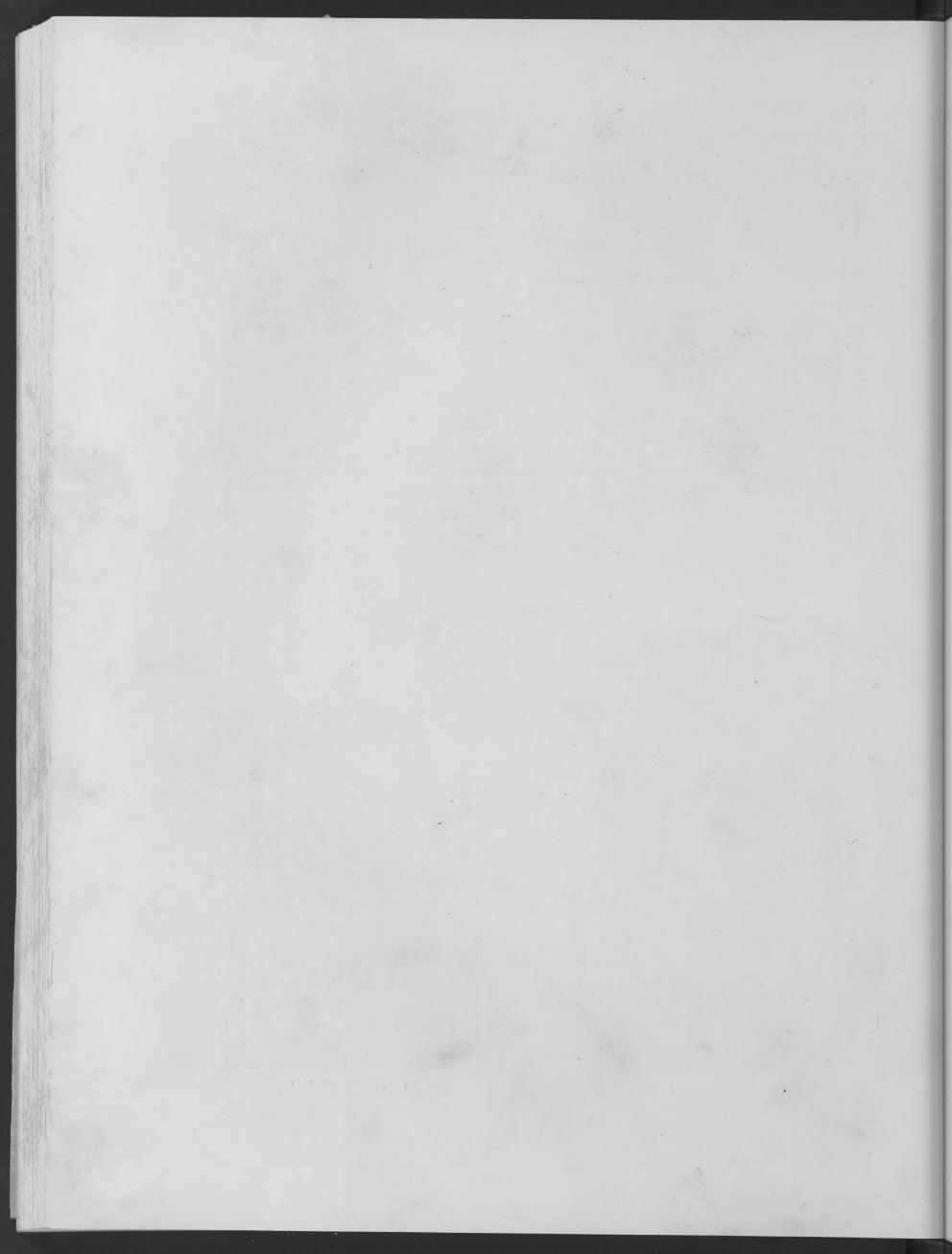
FIREPLACE IN DII

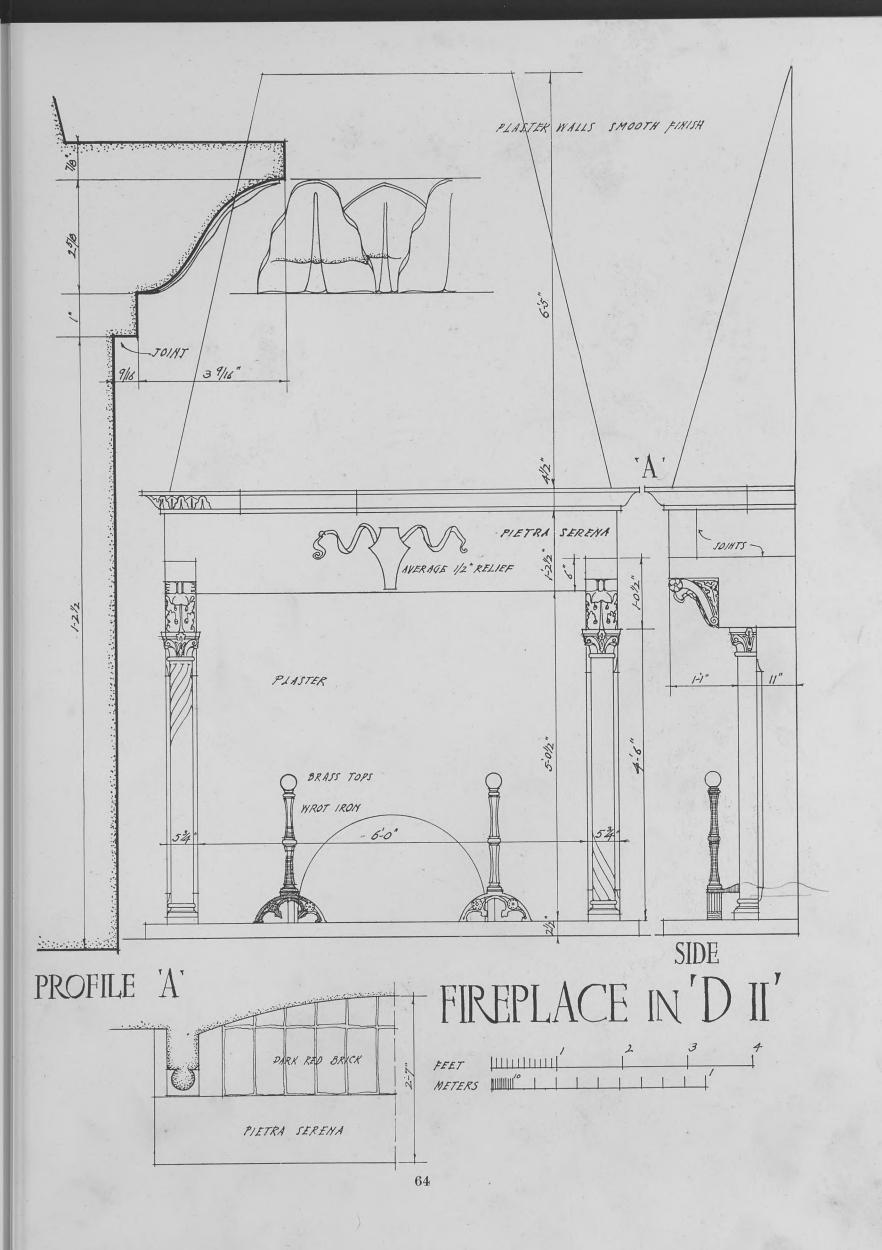


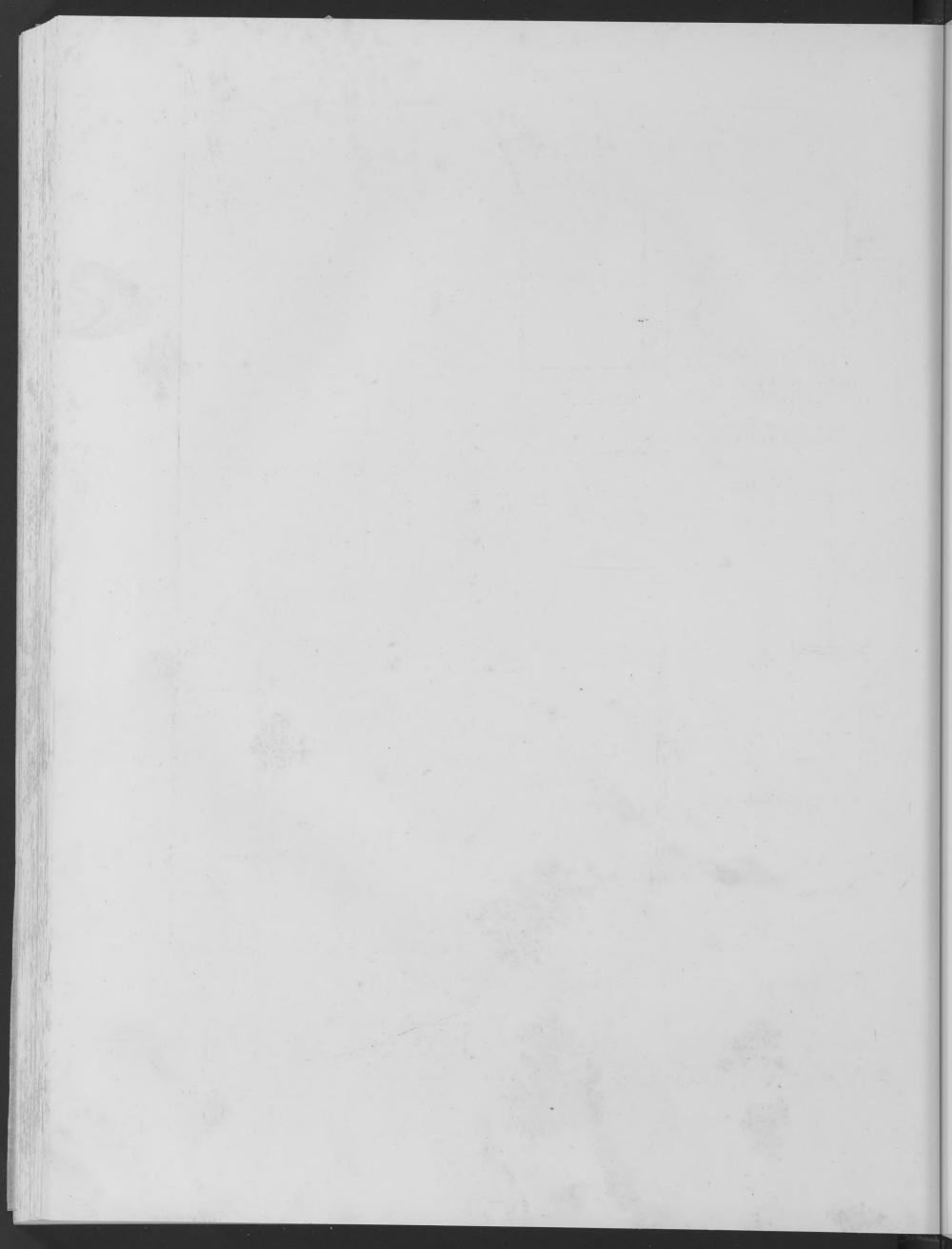
FIREPLACE IN DII

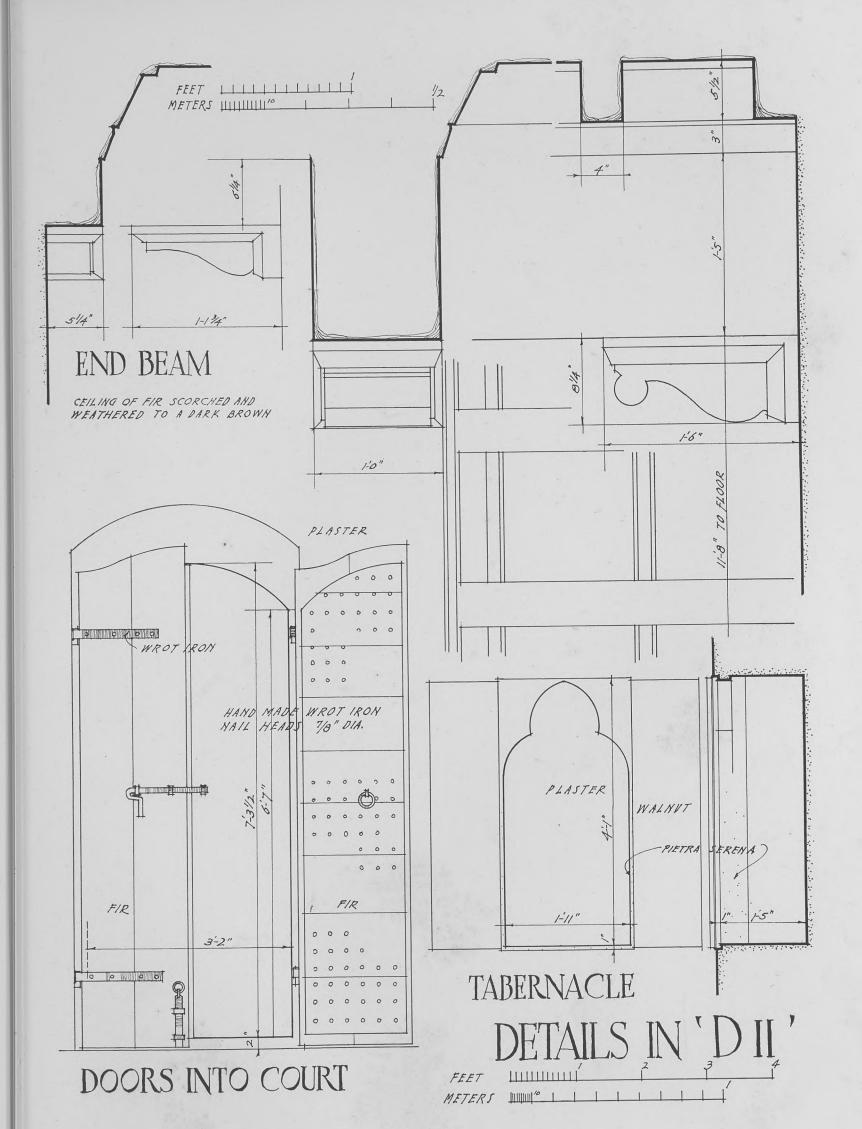


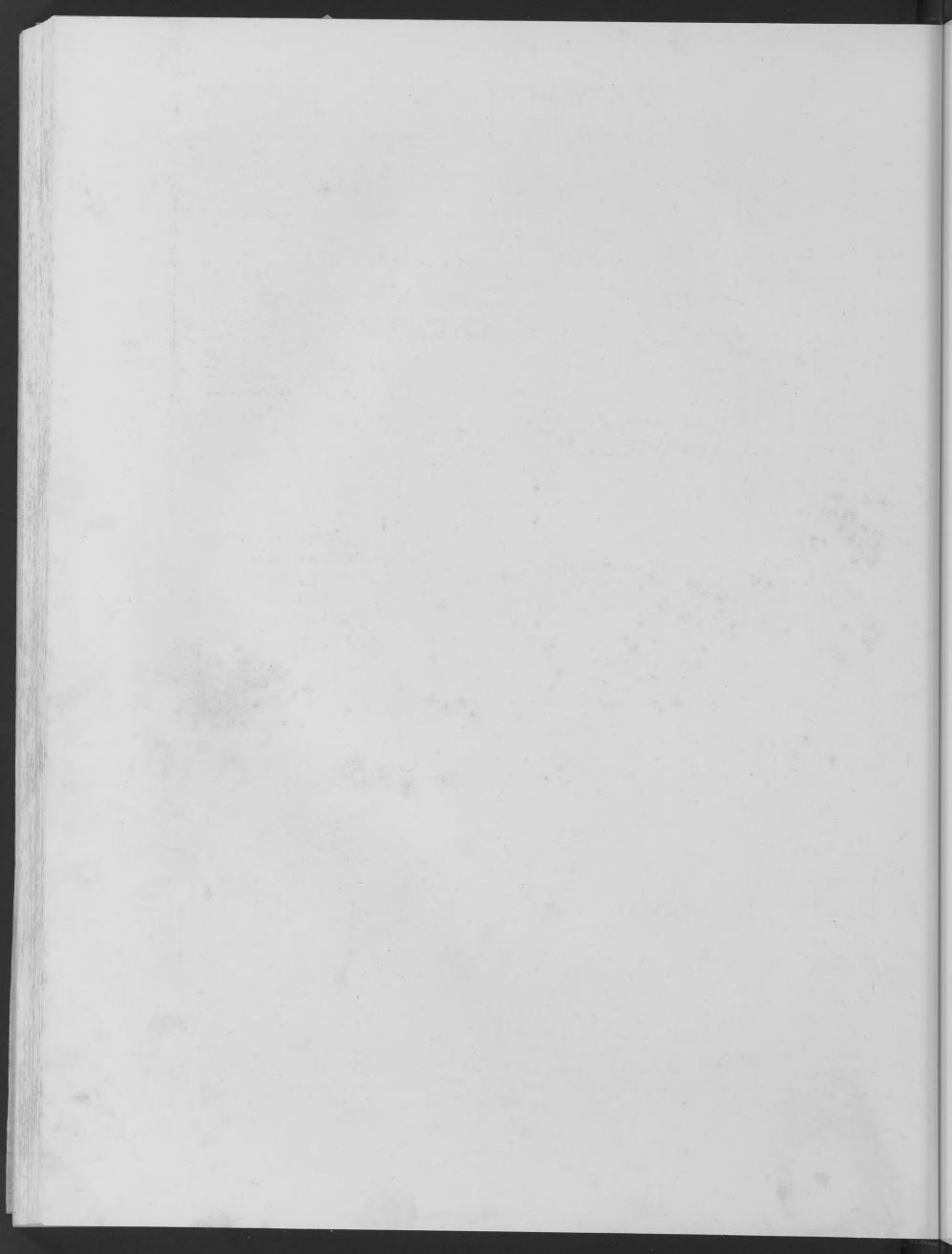
FIREPLACE IN DIII

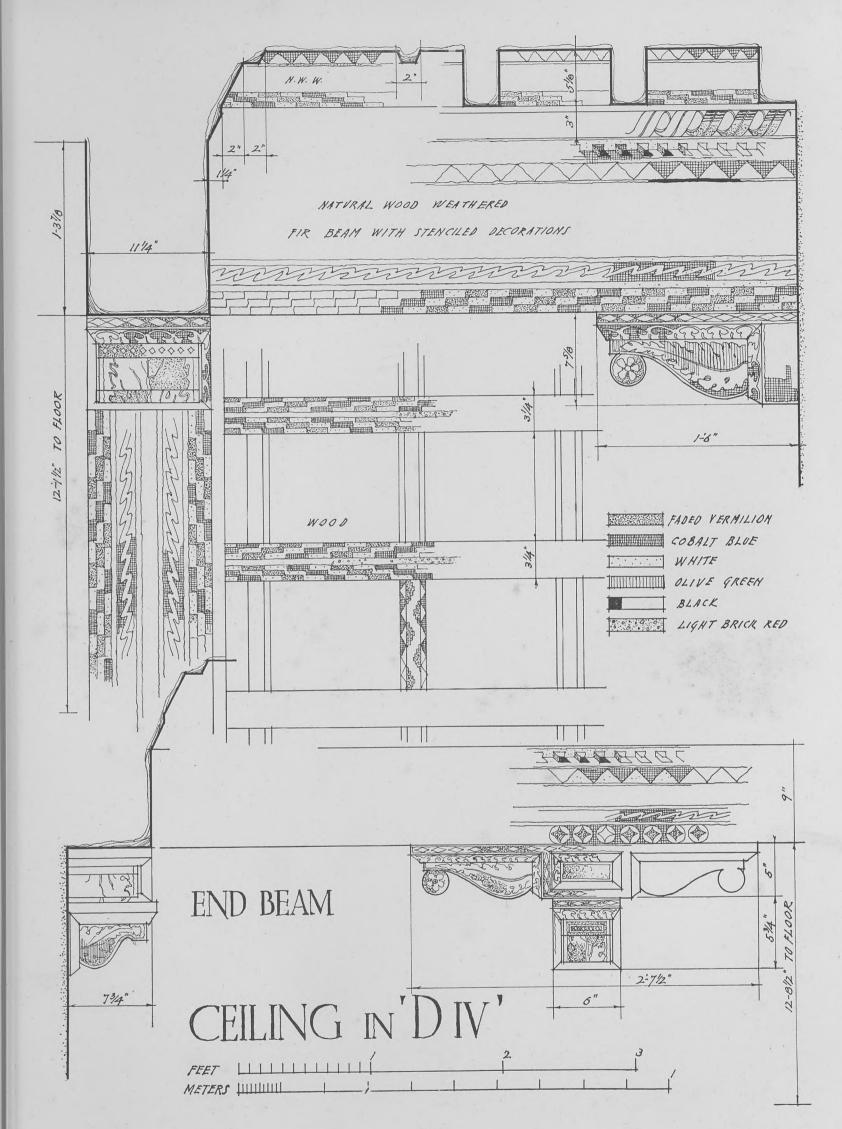




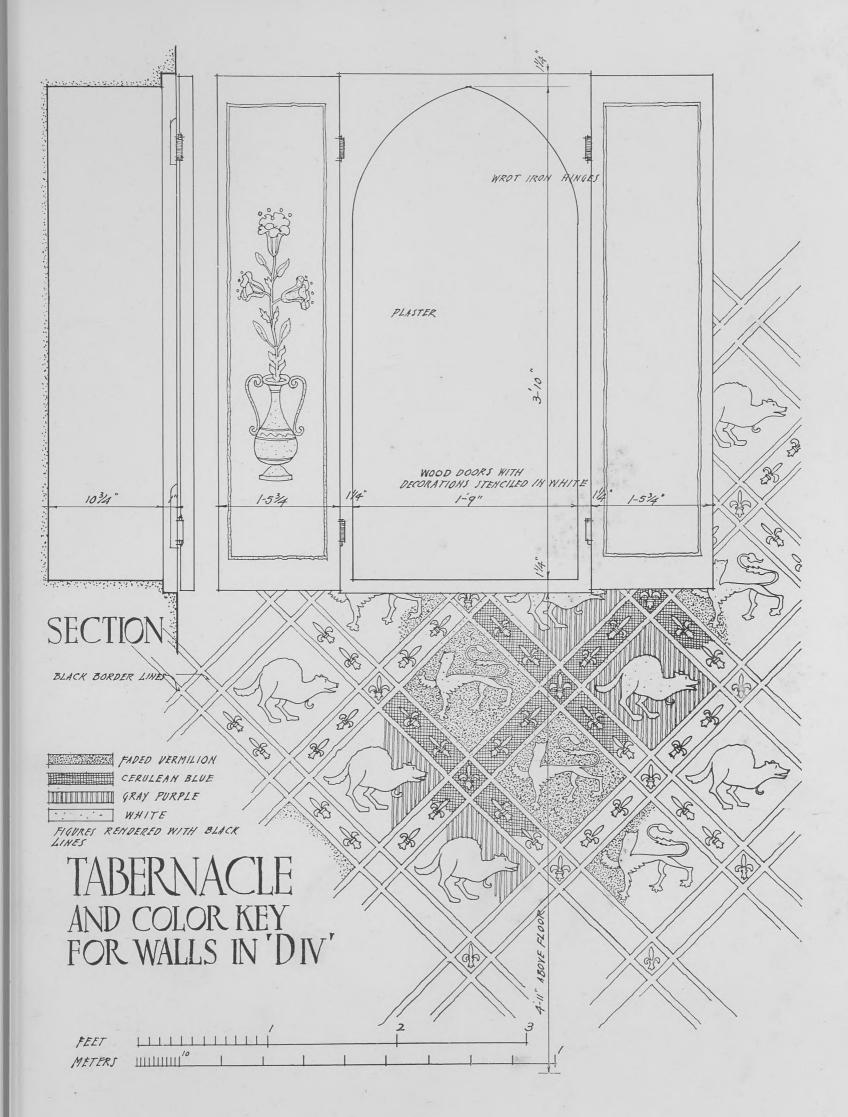




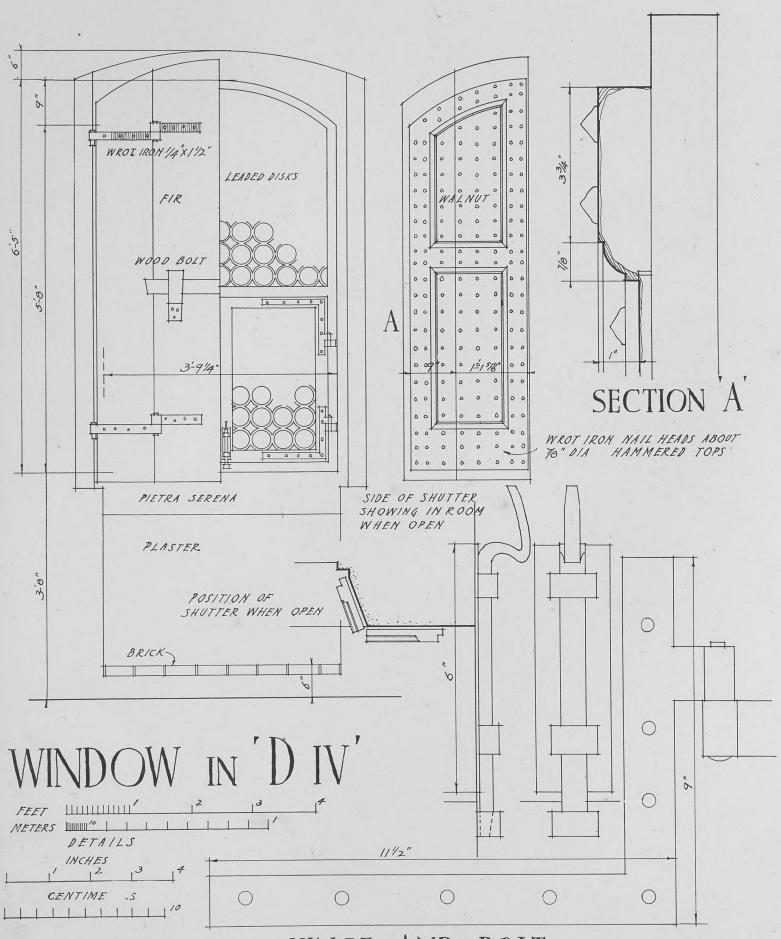






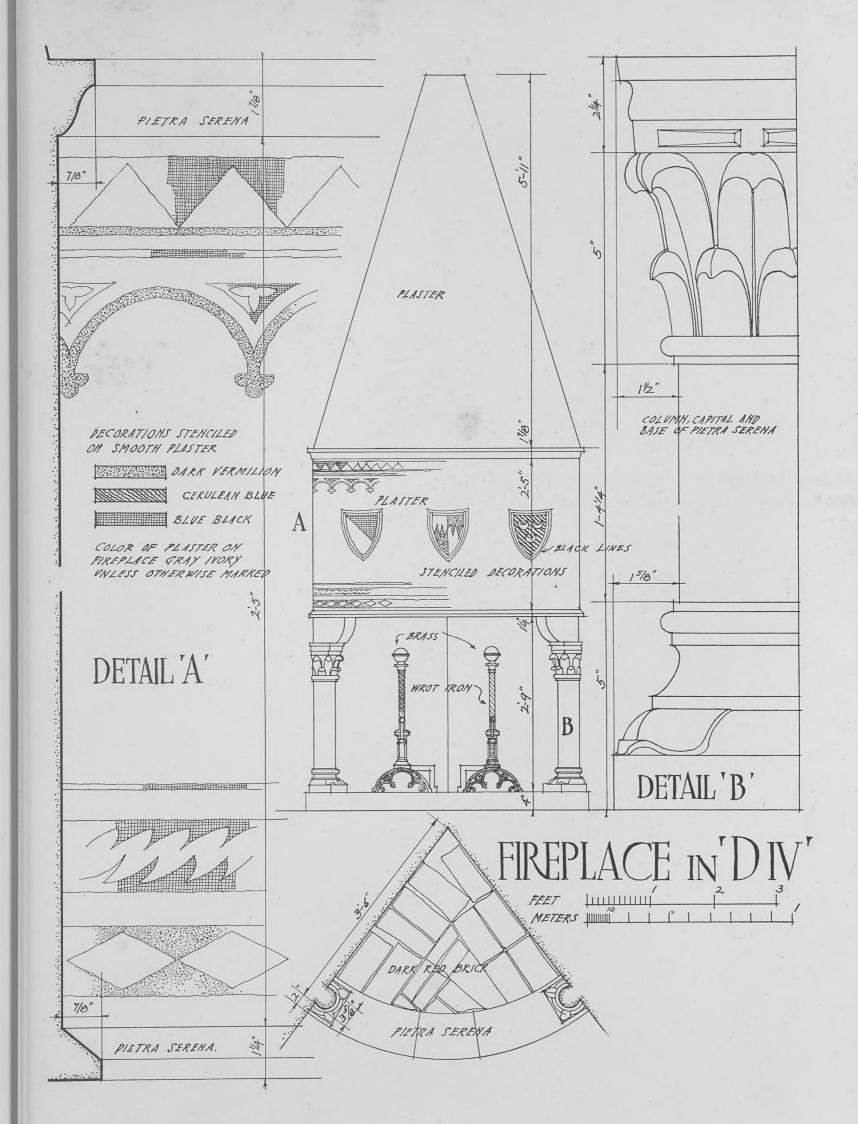




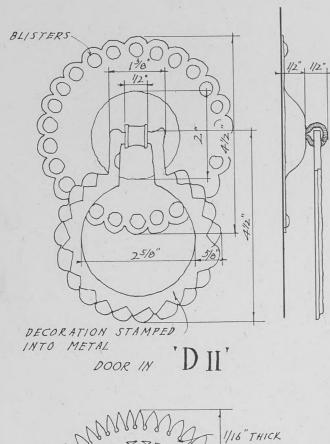


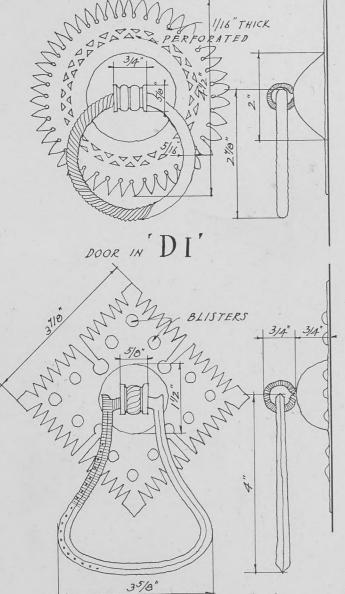
HINGE AND BOLT



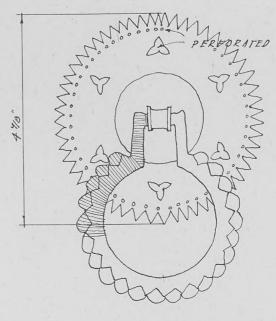




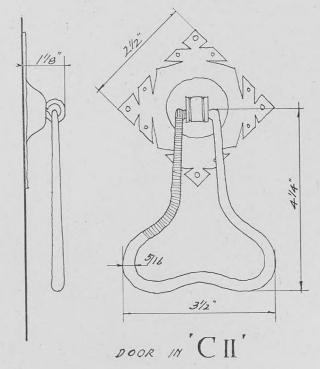




DOOR IN 'C III'



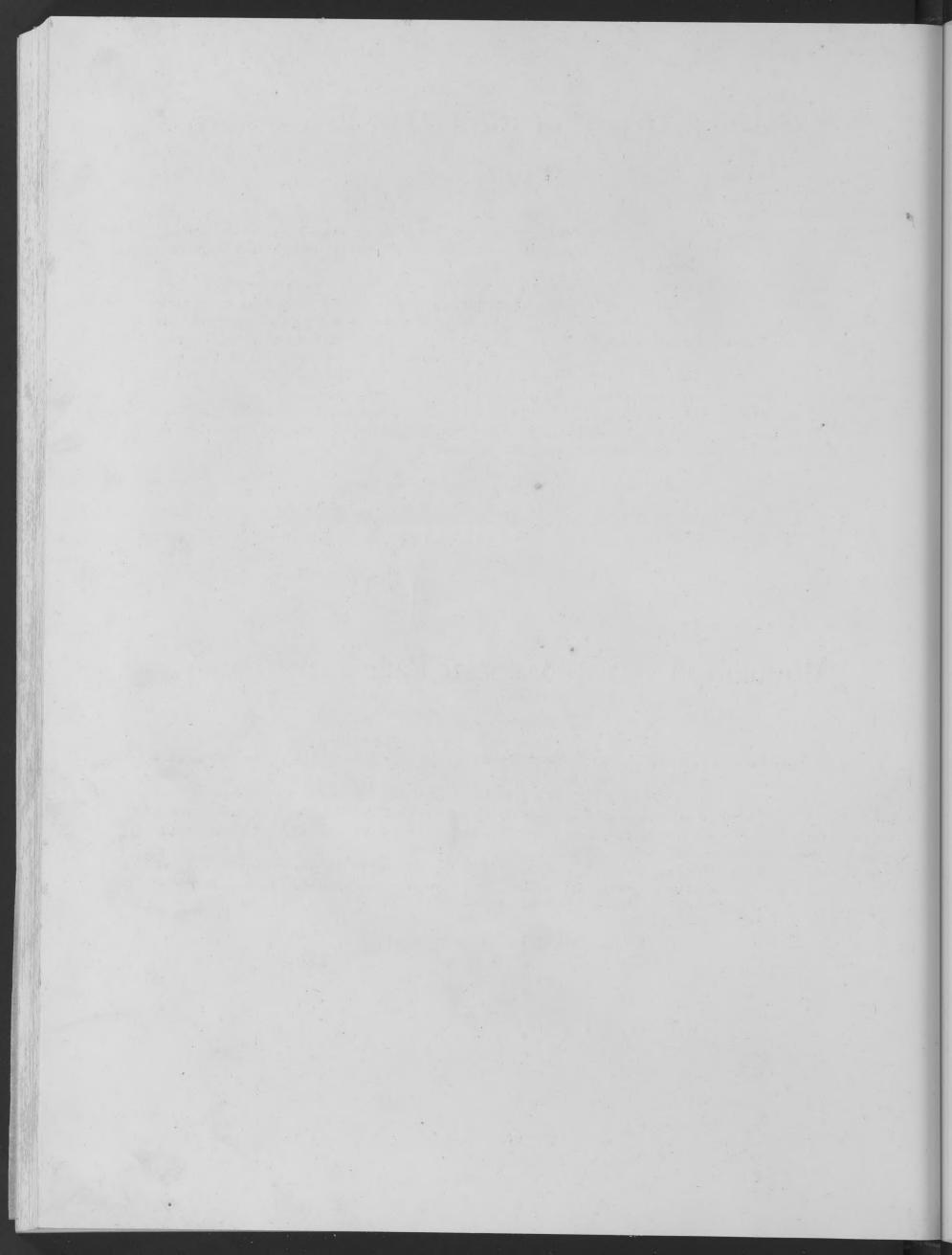
DOOR IN 'DII'



HAND HAMMERED WROT IRON.
ESCUTCHEONS ABOUT 1/16" THICK.
BLISTERS HAMMERED OUT FROM
BACK.

# METAL WORK on doors

INCHES 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
CENTIMETERS 1 1 10 20



#### Ornamental Details of the Italian Renaissance

By ARTHUR L. BLAKESLEE

THIS book has been compiled with the object of providing a moderate-priced volume, of convenient size, presenting in compact form a series of drawings, prepared by the author, illustrating the architectural and sculptural detail of the best period of the Italian Renaissance. In this respect it is believed to be unique, and

that it will meet a long-felt want.

Needless to state, the work of this period has been profusely illustrated in many volumes, which have been produced from time to time for a great many years, but such books are either too expensive for those of limited means, or too bulky for ready reference. In this book there are one hundred plates of carefully selected subjects, representing the work of the best talent, principally of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The drawings have been made with great care, and only the most reliable and trustworthy sources have been consulted, with a view to producing an authentic standard reference work of practical value to architects, draftsmen, sculptors, modelers, woodcarvers, and students of the work of this period.

Such art centers as Bologna, Brescia, Como, Cremona, Florence, Genoa, Gubbio, Milan, Padua, Pavia, Pisa, Rome, Siena, Treviso, Urbino, Venice and Verona have been freely drawn upon for subject-matter with

the result that detail, of the choicest character only, has been used.

One volume,  $9\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$  inches, bound in buckram

Price \$12.50

### Monograph of the Massimi Palace in Rome

First published in 1818

THE Massimi Palace was rebuilt about 1536 by Baldassare Peruzzi on the ruins of an earlier palace, which was destroyed in the sack of Rome in 1527.

It was owned by one of Rome's richest nobles, Pietro Massimi, and is a splendid example of the best period of Italian Renaissance. In this Monograph the famous building is illustrated in a most complete manner, by carefully measured, exquisite drawings of the plans, façades, sections, ceilings, mouldings, architraves, friezes, cornices, capitals, woodwork, etc.

The little Palace Massimi, better known as the Palazzo Pirro, is equally well illustrated in this volume, which will prove of the greatest practical value to Architects, Decorators, and all others who are interested in

Architecture and Decoration of the Italian Renaissance.

40 plates, 13 x 17 in portfolio

Price \$10.00

## Brick and Terra Cotta Work in Italy During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance

BY HENRY STRACK

ALL of the important proportions and measurements of the buildings illustrated in this book have been taken with greatest care and accuracy. The façades are presented on so large a scale that architectural details, together with the cutting, joining and interlocking of the stones can be made out clearly.

One volume 14 x 18 inches, with 50 full page plates on linen hinges and numerous illustrations in the text.

Price \$20.00

### Architectural and Ornamental Details of Ancient Rome

First published in Paris about 1800

By CHARLES MOREAU

THIS book contains twenty-nine exquisite plates in portfolio, size 13 x 17, illustrating by carefully made drawings and measurements Cornices and Friezes, Moldings and Capitals, Architraves, Candelabra, Vases, Altars and other details from the Forum of Nerva, Temple of Jupiter the Thunderer, the Temple of Antonin and Faustine; Villa Borghese and other ancient Roman edifices.

The book will prove of undoubted value to Architects, Sculptors and Decorators.

Price \$10.00

